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THE

# STATESMAN AND NATION

## The Week-end Review

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## INSIDE GERMANY

Last autumn the Allies began the systematic destruction of western and central Germany. This was the result of an exaggerated belief in the military advantages of bombing and the policy of unconditional surrender; together these made it impossible for any section of Germany to "sell out" and precisely fitted the Nazi will to *Götterdämmerung*. To-day, therefore, Allied troops are entering cities in which no roadway exists until the bull-dozer clears a passage. Factories and machines, houses and public buildings are alike reduced to rubble. By way of contrast, the Russian advance has swept through areas that are not devastated, and the mines and factories of Silesia are already producing what the Russians need for the war and for reconstruction.

The human, administrative and economic problem which the Allies have set themselves by this policy is beginning to reveal itself. The Germans who survive within the rubbish heaps that were their cities prove to be much as commonsense would have expected. Indeed, those who understood how to classify Germans in 1939 and who have not allowed themselves to be stampeded by propaganda since, will find that they have the picture broadly right. The young Nazi toughs, the soldiers, the S.S. and leading Party officials are, of course, gone before the Allies arrive. There remains a mixed population of foreign workers and Germans, mostly middle-aged men and women and children. They are genuinely glad of our arrival if only because it means that the bombing has ceased. Most of them are politically ignorant and apathetic. As they begin to recover from what amounts to shell-shock, many are found to have maintained their pre-war groupings: Catholic Party members, Social Democrats and Communists still adhere to their allegiances, while children still under military age who have only known the Nazis as bullies who have failed to bring either the victory or prosperity they promised, tend to hate all authority. Workers who can show an anti-Nazi record express surprise when the Allies appoint as officials (in the Rhineland usually Catholics) those who have held positions under the Nazi government. This is a natural result of occupation by an army which is interested only in avoiding civilian problems and which tends to think that an experienced official must be respectable, while a worker seems an uncertain quantity for an administrative post.

Describing the conditions in which the population lives in shelters and holes in the ground, some correspondents have not hidden their dismay at the extent of the destruction. Both soldiers and journalists recall that, during these months of bombardment, the B.B.C. has continually declared that we were bombing "military objectives." Some confusion occurs about food supplies. Because stores of tinned food are found in many places, the less experienced type of reporters have talked of there being "plenty of food" in Germany. Of course, the situation depends not on the existence of a fortnight's emergency ration, but on whether, in the midst of the fighting, Germans can do their spring sowing or produce food for the coming year.

Again, if the troops are not to disbelieve all that is told them, no greater error could be committed than to base "non-fraternisation" on "security" grounds. They do not need to be many hours in these ruined towns to know that they have in these areas little to fear from civilian snipers or guerillas. "Non-fraternisation" is defensible only on the ground that it is too soon for the individual G.I. or British Tommy to decide for himself with what Germans he ought to be friendly. One clause of the non-fraternisation order instructs the troops to be "just and firm and set a standard of behaviour"—which should mean that looting (which has, in effect, been encouraged by the violent propaganda of the *Stars and Stripes*) should be punished at least as severely as the offence of association with a German woman. The punishment for this is usually a fine of 65 dollars.

Since the Allies are to occupy Germany for an indefinite period, these regulations must before long be revised. They are likely to lead to a dangerously indiscriminate reaction in favour of Germans, when the soldiers discover that many of them are docile and law-abiding. New and realistic regulations are needed to separate the sheep from the goats, and enable Allied officials and soldiers to live on terms with those Germans whom we appoint to administrative positions, while they fulfil their promise to extirpate the Nazis. Even in the prisoner-of-war camps in Britain and America the process of segregation has only just begun. It is still true that most of these camps are bossed and organised by Nazi thugs who plot to go back to Germany and begin the business of murder and terrorism once again. This is an inexcusable scandal.

The future of Europe largely depends on the example of democratic behaviour and competence that our occupying authorities present to the growing generation in Germany. They now believe nothing. The crux of "re-education" is not in text-books, but in example. No one expects the Allies to "rehabilitate" Germany while so much of Europe is in ruins. But rebuilding there will have to be. The existing policy which does not even encourage or aid Germans to rehabilitate themselves cannot be sustained, unless we are prepared to police a Germany of starving and unemployed people. The economic problem involved is staggering, and it grows more appalling with each day's bombing. Allied personnel, we are told, is gravely short for constructive work in Germany. We might employ some of the experts among German prisoners of war who can be sifted out as reliable. The war of destruction cannot last much longer; there are, for the first time, signs of cracks in the Wehrmacht. The Allies have plenty of negative slogans about punishment. But what is their constructive plan for the future of Europe?

### Garrison for the Redoubt

Nazi plans, which we analysed last week, for a prolonged stand, after the loss of North Germany, in an Alpine Redoubt, have met with two serious reverses. In the East the costly failure of Friessner's counter-offensive in Hungary has been followed by renewed Russian attacks astride the Danube towards Bratislava, accompanied by a powerful move south of Oppeln towards the Moravian Gap. In the West the brilliant success

of Generals Patton and Patch in routing and disintegrating the score of German divisions (command of which had lately been taken over by Hausser, an S.S. General) in the Saar means a considerable reduction in the number of German troops manning the Rhine south of Coblenz and available, theoretically, as a garrison for the Redoubt's western (Bavarian) perimeter. This is not to say that the total potential garrison is negligible. There are believed to be 25 German divisions still in Italy, and something like 60 more from Silesia, Slovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia (many, no doubt, depleted in strength) might be able to fall back on the Bohemian and Austrian mountains. But, apart from the hostility of the Czechs within the Redoubt, recent accounts in the Swiss press of growing resistance in Austria to the regime suggest another source of internal weakness. The Austrian *Volkssturm* is reported to be completely unreliable, and there are said to be almost daily executions for "treachery," such as harbouring deserters, secret listening to Allied broadcasts and the forging of passports and ration-cards. Like the mass of Germans, the Austrian people are probably too war-weary and terrorised to organise an armed rising; but the Redoubt will clearly contain many millions wholly out of sympathy with its purposes.

## Russia's Two Neighbours

The results of the Finnish elections—the first to be held in any "liberated" country—show a welcome shift in the balance of Parliamentary power. Though all the parties, even those of the Right, made "good relations" with Russia a plank in their platform, one-fourth of all the seats have gone to the Democratic Union, consisting of Communists, the Russophil group of Social Democrats and other minor progressive parties. Tanner's anti-Soviet section of the old Social Democratic party lost heavily. The return of large numbers of Conservative members disposes of any suggestion that the elections were "made" by the U.S.S.R., whose policy is manifestly not to interfere in Finland's internal affairs so long as the Finnish Government is ready to work with the U.S.S.R. Evidence accumulates that Russia is prepared to pursue a similar policy towards Poland—where, alas, little progress can yet be recorded in the Moscow Commission's efforts to promote a Coalition Government which might hold an early election. Not merely is material aid from the U.S.S.R. reaching Poland in the form of lorries, food and prefabricated houses, but every encouragement is being given to the provisional local authorities to get life going again. In Lodz and even Posen the factories are restarting; some universities are being reopened; and the reconstituted Polish trade unions have just concluded a conference in the ruins of Warsaw.

## Terror Comes to Denmark

Economic chaos and terrorism are invading Denmark. When Marshal Koniev in January overran Silesia, all exports of coal from the Reich to Denmark were stopped; the resulting fuel shortage has meant a severe curtailment of industrial production and railway activity. The limited number of trains still running have been almost entirely monopolised for the transport southwards from Aarhus of German troops evacuated from Norway, and the permanent way has been subjected to numerous daily attacks by Danish saboteurs. Food supplies, hitherto ample, have been reduced by an influx of German civilian refugees from the East and by the increasing use made of Denmark as a hospital centre for German wounded. After a period of relatively lenient military government under General von Hanneken, the administrative command in Denmark was taken over last month by General Lindemann, a "tough" veteran of the campaigns in the Baltic States. There is no evidence that he and his notorious S.S. police chief, General Pancke, are succeeding in breaking the spirit of Danish resistance; but there have been some scores of official executions of "terrorists," and on one occasion this month five patriots were removed by the Germans from prison and shot in a Copenhagen square—*pour décourager les autres*. If the present influx of German wounded and refugees into Denmark continues, yet another grim "liberation" problem will be created.

## Prospects in Burma

After a desperate resistance, the Japanese garrison has withdrawn from Mandalay, but there is no evidence of a decisive result in the campaign for Central Burma. The Japanese forces northeast of Mandalay are apparently retreating before the British and Chinese columns now converging on Goktiek, midway between Mandalay and Lashio; their line of retreat is presumably through Loilem, whence they can regain the main Rangoon-Mandalay railway at Thazi. In the Thazi-Mandalay-Chauk triangle, east of the Irrawaddy, the bulk of the Japanese Army in Burma is now partially "contained"—that is, its withdrawal southwards is menaced by the British force established at Meiktila, some 20 miles west of Thazi; but it seems premature yet to talk, as some correspondents are doing, of an encirclement. The Japanese position in Central Burma would, of course, be fatally compromised if the British forces operating on the Arakan coast could break across the hill barrier and reach the Irrawaddy; but there has been no news recently of notable successes in this area: the terrain is extremely difficult, and in less than two months' time the rains are due. Meanwhile, there has still been no official statement of our policy towards the Burmese Government which the Japanese left with a large measure of freedom, nor any response to Burma's demand for independence.

## Who Goes Short?

At this stage of the war the prospect of reduced rations pleases nobody. But the present food crisis cannot be solved by turning it into an Anglo-American waist-measuring contest. Whilst public interest is occupied with the comparison of meat rations in the two countries, the real point is being missed. Europe is very near the starvation line. Both Britain and America are a good way above it. To meet the situation in the liberated territories Britain has allocated the food stocks reserved for war emergencies, and our "working capital" is now only 6,000,000 tons. That fact, to judge from the charges of greed and hoarding now bandied about in the United States, has not received the publicity it deserved. If a cut in our rations is the means of ensuring that people live in Europe who might otherwise die of hunger and disease, that is sufficient compensation. But we are entitled to expect other nations, better placed for food than ourselves, to make an equal, if not greater, sacrifice. At the moment, American meat consumption is nearly five times as large per person as our own. It could be reduced without hardship to maintain the supplies hitherto sent to Britain. If the American conscience is still unsatisfied, however, the whole amount could be sent to Europe. We can make do with twopence off the joint.

## The De-taxing Bill

The Income-tax Relief Bill, like most measures dealing with tax-policy, is largely unintelligible to the layman—much more so than need be if reasonable attempts were made to re-draft the income-tax law as a whole instead of keeping on tinkering with it. In this case, though the details are obscure, the general purport of the Bill is plain. It is meant, in the words of the *Sunday Times*, "to encourage industrialists to make every possible effort to modernise their plant." This is in itself a laudable objective, for the evidence about the bad state of much of the productive plant of British industry is overwhelming, and five years of war have necessarily, in a great many industries, made the position a great deal worse. The trouble is that, under private capitalism, there appears to be no way of inducing the reluctant capitalist to get better plant except by making him a present of it. If the State is to present capital for improvement by way of tax revisions, the logical corollary is a stiff policy of control over prices and production to prevent monopoly practices.

## Monopoly's New Claim

The steel industry has now come into the open with a plan, singularly resembling Mr. Foot's plan for coal, for reconstituting itself as a publicly sanctioned monopoly after the war. It proposes to reorganise the Iron and Steel Federation as a stronger body, to which the constituent firms will give up a good deal of their powers; and on this basis it seeks Government recognition and support for its monopolistic programme. The industry professes, indeed, to be ready to accept some measure of public supervision, such as was exercised before the war by the Import Duties Advisory Committee, and, like the colliery owners, declares its intention to serve faithfully the public interest. Indeed, it goes farther than Mr. Foot by stating its readiness to exercise its own control "within the framework of Government policy." This would be more reassuring than it is if we could forget that I.D.A.C.'s supposed supervision of the industry before the war was purely nominal, and that it was allowed throughout the 'thirties to pursue monopolistic price policies, based on control of imports, which were as profitable to its shareholders as they were damaging to others—for example, to the export trades whenever steel entered largely into their products. We fail to find anything in the industry's proposals for a stronger monopoly that would be likely to bring steel prices down or to secure efficient expansion of output.

## Mr. Churchill and the Trade Unions

Mr. Churchill has again, and with finality, rejected the demand of the Trades Union Congress for a modification of the Trade Unions Act of 1927. Having successfully juggled with this issue right through the war, he has now committed himself to a final rejection. Naturally, he puts the onus on the Conservative Party, which, he tells the T.U.C., is dead against any modification of the Act. We recall, however, that Mr. Churchill was the most inveterate of all the enemies of the Trade Unions in the struggle of 1926; if he led a new Government after the coming election, he would resume the war against Trade Unionism with all his old fervour. It would, of course, not be called a war against Trade Unionism, but only against Left Wing Trade Unionism. But it is pertinent to ask how on such grounds it is possible to justify preventing the Post Office workers from belonging to the Trades Union Congress, or retaining a definition of "illegal strikes" which no lawyer can understand, or, indeed, perpetuating any part of an Act passed in class vindictiveness on the morrow of the General Strike.

## How Many Houses?

The White Paper on housing confirms the worst fears of coming shortage. The building industry is down to about 300,000 workers, as compared with well over 1,050,000 before the war. It is planned to have 800,000 builders one year after the end of the German war, but when the pre-war level is to be regained nobody can say. Even if we include the full allocation of 145,000 temporary houses—which are a very doubtful factor—the total number to be finished in two post-war years will not exceed a single year's pre-war building. We note that Mr. George Hicks, explaining the White Paper, puts the total need for houses at four million, but merely holds out a distant hope of a building rate of 400,000 a year in some uncertain future. The figure of 750,000 houses quoted in the White Paper as the imme-

diate need is a gross under-estimate. It covers only the number of houses required to enable every family to have some sort of roof, no matter how bad, over its head, when the repairs programme is finished. But even that immediate target is more than twice what the Government plans to get done within two years of the end of the European war. There is no sign here of the "drive and punch and, may I say, genius" which Mr. Churchill promised, at the Tory Conference, would be applied to housing.

## PARLIAMENT: Down to Earth

*Wednesday.*

It was generally felt that Tuesday's debate on Civil Aviation was disappointing. The chance of handling a great new enterprise worthily had been missed. The Government's White Paper, as Cripps explained with elaborate and courteous plausibility, was yet another of these Coalition compromises between public control and private capitalism—though it was not, he insisted, based primarily on political considerations but on a realistic desire "to get the immediate best out of all those factors which can be brought together."

Fred Montague, from the Socialist front bench, remarked bitterly on the fact that Cripps, "of all people in the world," had made this speech: "I could almost imagine I was listening to an insurance or banking company chairman making his annual report." He denounced the false analogy between shipping and aviation: "For shipping operators to claim to be air operators is like an ostler claiming to be a qualified motor mechanic, or a barber a qualified surgeon." He also gave a good definition of what the Conservative Party and the shipping and railway interests meant by free enterprise: "State backing all the time, State risk all the time, but private profits also all the time."

Hore-Belisha, in a weighty historical discussion on the deadening influence of Government control, climbed yet another rung towards at any rate "caretaker" office. "Liberate our wings!" he boomed. Frank Bowles accused Lord Swinton of having "intrigued" with Mr. Berle (which Cripps denied), and made his usual plea for a world organisation of aviation in the interest of world peace—ending: "I think it is hopeless. I give in." Henry Brooke (S.R. director) was much interrupted from the Labour benches, especially when he was rash enough to emphasise that the railway companies had "considerable reserves." There was general applause when George Buchanan intervened to say, mock-innocently: "The railway companies run hotels, steamships, and all kinds of things; now they're going to run aircraft. I wonder when they are going to start to run decent railways?" Mrs. Tate gave vent to an entertainingly acidulated general moan:—

Mrs. Tate: . . . The food on British railways . . . is a disgrace to civilisation. But it is typical of the British attitude to food. Certainly the hon. Member for North Cumberland (Mr. W. Roberts), who wants to travel in discomfort, looks as if he took no interest in food.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Lady should not make personal references to Members.

Mrs. Tate: I apologise; I was only trying to refer to the hon. Member's very ascetic and high-minded attitude. . . . Personally, I admit that I think there are very few things which can give one so much pleasure three times a day, from the cradle to the grave, as food.

Lennox-Boyd wound up the debate. Wordy Members had left him only about 20 minutes to do it in. It was his maiden speech as a Minister, and his first speech in five years. He delivered it unhurriedly, but at a breakneck speed which indicated a real grasp of the points he had to make.

At question-time Edith Summerskill asked the Minister of Food about the recent whitening—allegedly profitable to the millers—of the national loaf. The Minister said that "we must march with the times," and that the change in the loaf did not "appreciably" modify its nutritiousness; but did not explain why it was necessary to modify this at all, appreciably or otherwise.

PONTIFEX MINOR

# HOW MUCH SOCIALISM?

In his address to the Conservative Conference the Prime Minister indulged in the picturesque statement that "our Socialist friends have officially committed themselves to a programme for nationalising all the means of production, distribution and exchange," and added that this had been done "much to the disgust of some of their leaders." Against this, he gave his hearers to understand that he was for a return to the "old England," to which he attributed the national record of the past five years of war. About the future of the "controls"—he was as emphatic in generalisation as he was vague about his real intentions.

Now where did he get this knowledge that the Labour Party, which he was presumably meaning when he referred to "our Socialist friends," is committed to the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange? We profess to follow official Labour policy with some care, and we are quite unable to discover in it any warrant for such a conclusion. On the contrary, both the Labour Party officially and its individual leaders have shown every desire to limit as narrowly as possible the immediate field of socialisation and to avoid "nationalisation for nationalisation's sake" as carefully as Mr. Churchill says he wishes to avoid "control for control's sake." The Labour Party is out to nationalise, as a matter of practical policy, not "all the means of production, distribution and exchange," but precisely as few of such means as will enable them, when they get into power, to carry out the promises they have made of full employment, living wages, tolerable housing and a reasonable measure of social security.

Nationalisation, as it figures in the immediate programme of the Labour Party, is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The political Left in Great Britain believes that it is impossible to promote prosperity without certain measures of nationalisation coupled with a large amount of public control of big business. It believes that a return to private enterprise over the whole field, and to uncontrolled private enterprise over most of it, would lead to a speedy return of mass unemployment, to exploitation of the consuming public by high prices, and to failure to get enough exports to pay for imports at the level which a programme of full employment connotes. No doubt, in the long run, the Labour Party, as a Socialist Party, wants to carry public ownership, in one form or another, a good deal farther than it has any wish to carry it at once; but we do not believe that, even in the longest run, it has any desire to nationalise "all the means of production, distribution and exchange," or even to bring them all under any form of public ownership. It has assuredly no desire to nationalise either the Co-operative Movement or private retail trade, or most forms of farming, or the whole mass of small and medium-scale business. Even in the long run, the Labour Party favours public ownership, not for its own sake, but when it is, or may come to be, needed in order to put right demonstrated inefficiency, to prevent monopoly and deliberate restriction of supply, or to create the conditions requisite for full employment and successful local and regional planning.

What do these principles of action imply when they are translated into terms of what must be done at once as the foundation of a successful policy of sound and economic reconstruction? They involve taking over the coal mines, because there is plainly no other way of dealing with them, unless we are prepared, as Mr. Foot wishes, to hand them over to a coalowners' monopoly armed with full power to exploit the public. They involve taking over the railways and most of the large-scale road services, because there is no other way of settling the road-rail controversy and creating a unified transport system, unless, again, we are prepared to place ourselves at the mercy of a private monopoly armed with almost unqualified power. They involve completing the business of taking over the service of electricity supply, at least as far as generation is concerned, and of making effective regional arrangements for distribution. They probably involve taking over the production of raw steel, in preference to leaving it to a monopoly which is even now busy with plans for consolidating its power. Certainly they involve taking over the Bank of England and granting it, unless the commercial banks are to be taken over as well, enough power to control their operations as agents of the Government's full employment policy.

There is but one other piece of nationalisation besides these that is at all likely to figure in the Labour Party's election programme; and we do not know yet whether it will so figure or not. The problem of the land must be tackled at once, for no effective planning can possibly proceed until it has been tackled. There are, however, two alternative ways of tackling it. Nationalisation is, in our view, much the better of the two; but if the Labour Party, in its desire to limit the field of nationalisation, decides to postpone that issue, there remains the alternative of a full and complete carrying out of the proposals made in the Uthwatt Report. This would be a second best, but the Party might favour it if there were any evidence that it would be fought less obstinately, in the Commons and in the Lords, than outright nationalisation.

Here, as against the Prime Minister's fancy picture, is a realistic forecasting of the amount of nationalisation that a Labour Government might be expected to attempt. But clearly so limited a programme could not avail either to ensure full employment or to prevent monopolistic exploitation unless it had as its complement a considerable measure of control over the price and output policies of all big business. It would be necessary, not merely for a year or two after the war, but permanently, to establish a system under which the fixing of prices or the limiting of output by combines or trade associations would be made unlawful except with the consent of the Government in each specific case. It would be necessary to set up commissions for the reorganisation under public authority of industries, such as cotton, which have got themselves into a hopeless mess, and for the Government to equip itself, in the consumers' interests, with an effective machinery of costing, audit and technical inspection of the proceedings of private industry, in order to ensure greater efficiency. Special measures (to which we shall return next week) would be required to cope with the housing crisis. Finally, it would be indispensable for the State to take a hand in ensuring not only that firms pay proper attention to export markets but also that they work together, on approved lines, in supplying these markets, so as to obtain for this country the foreign exchange which it must get to pay for essential foodstuffs and raw materials.

No doubt it suited Mr. Churchill excellently to present his audience, as they in turn will presently be trying to present the electors, with a showy caricature of what Labour would do if it were returned to power. No doubt it also suits him to impose on his own vagueness of programme—his Four Years' Plan, to which he keeps referring, but which he has never defined—the halo of being not Conservative merely, but the work of men of goodwill from any Party, including the allegedly discontented Labour leaders whom he has not ventured individually to name. It is, however, none the less important that the Labour Party should not allow the Prime Minister to impress his caricature of Labour policy on the electors' minds. Labour is building up a fine team of candidates, many of them young Servicemen. What they need to aid their campaigning is a short, clear, authoritative statement of what a Labour Government would actually do. The answer to Mr. Churchill is to force the Tories to fight the election on "measures," instead of simply on "the man."

# THE AIR FOR BIG BUSINESS

WHILE the Prime Minister was nailing the flag of "free enterprise" to the Tory mast, the Government published its plans for the re-organisation of Civil Aviation. Here was the ideal instance for testing its guiding principles. The field was nearly clear, since civilian flying has sunk during this long war into a condition of suspended animation. It turns out that "free enterprise" means the most rigid monopoly it is possible to conceive. While the Americans retain and encourage competition alike in their internal and external air services, the British plan is to select in each geographical region a "chosen instrument" on which the exclusive right to organise air transport will be conferred. Not only is competition ruled out between rival British air-lines; it is also eliminated between the new and the older forms of transport.

That is the one original feature that stands out in this plan. The railways and the shipping companies are to supply a considerable part of the capital of the new Corporations, while in one instance, the South American service, shipping will be the predominant partner. Travellers will, indeed, have their choice between sailing or flying to Buenos Ayres, but the same profit-making concern will dictate the conditions of the two forms of travel and reap the gains. Whether this solicitude for the older vested interests, thus sheltered from their modern rival, will spur them to develop aviation to the utmost we gravely doubt. There is an ominous parallel for this arrangement. Once England was the pioneer in inland navigation. When the canals were handed over to the railways all development stopped, and canals became the Cinderella of transport. Of course, the railways cannot treat the internal air-ways of Britain as they did the canals, but the parallel is a warning that, when two services are covered by one private monopoly, neither is likely to be efficiently developed.

The perversity of this decision to build our air services on a capitalistic model is peculiarly striking, because from the start down to the present day flying has owed most of its development to the State. Most of the pioneering alike in the technique of flight and in the construction of planes was done by the military and naval services. Most of the inventions and experiments were made in the research laboratories of the State and at its cost. The pilots themselves have usually had their training, again at its cost, in one air arm or the other. One of the most singular features of the new scheme is that the fleet of planes with which the new Corporations will start work is actually to be supplied to them on lease by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Not only will it bear the capital cost of constructing them: it will supply the ingenuity and the experience that go into their designs. Finally, in the early years, the first civilian air-lines got going, and for long maintained themselves, thanks only to the subsidies they received.

If we seek further to complete this singular picture of "free enterprise," we look in vain for the *entrepreneur* whose readiness to take a risk entitled him, according to the classical economists, to earn all the profit he could get—subject to the check of competition. The heads of the central organisation, the British Overseas Airways Corporation, are not pioneers of the old type, ruthless it may be but adventurous and efficient, who worked their way up by audacity and industry on their own merits. They are to be chosen and nominated, or at least approved, by the Ministry. We can discover in this scheme none of the merits and advantages claimed for capitalism. It has only one feature in common with "free enterprise": these Corporations will be run for profit.

It is disturbing that the spokesmen of the Labour Party in the War Cabinet have given their sanction to this scheme. On their behalf it will be urged that it includes ample provisions for control. The Ministry appoints or approves the directors and it plans the routes that are to be served. In addition, a tribunal will be set up with full powers to judge the adequacy of the service rendered and the charges levied. This is, of course, inevitable if civilian flying is to be handed over to a profit-making monopoly. But it is a compromise that never has worked happily. To impose by external control on companies whose first concern is to make profits for their shareholders the duty of serving the public is a psychological impossibility. The mental outlook of Big Business cannot be transformed in this way. Nor will the control be effective if, as commonly happens, the men who sit on the tribunal, not to mention the Minister himself, are themselves drawn from circles steeped in the same attitude to affairs. The worst of these compromises which Labour accepts as some concession to its ideal of disinterested service is that the average man identifies them with Socialism. He is naturally impatient when he watches the irritation, delay and friction which interference from outside usually causes, and he doubts with good reason whether the desired end is often attained.

Socialist technique for securing service of the public good is the exact opposite of this external interference. It is to create an institution organically designed for public service. Owned by the community, it is not torn by conflicting and contradictory motives. It needs no control from outside because its own governing board, representing consumers and workers, as well as the State, owes no dual allegiance. Its constitution is the guarantee that it will serve the common good. If the Labour Party accepts external control, even as a partial substitute for its own ideal, it will bring its own doctrine into disrepute and play into the hands of the demagogues, who have already half-persuaded the public that Socialism means inspection and the filling up of forms. On the contrary, it is in the modern world the only way of escaping these inconveniences.

The White Paper contrives to discuss civil aviation at length without once mentioning the subject of defence or its bearing on world-security. It ignores, first of all, the obvious fact that in the event of war these Corporations, their air-fields and their staffs will instantly be controlled and mobilised for military purposes. It then creates its Corporations which are to fly over all the frontiers of Europe and the East, without considering the security organisation into which they will have to be fitted. Nothing emerges clearly save that they will be the competitors of many foreign Corporations, some of which will have a world-wide scope. To bar Germany and Japan from the air will not avail to make aviation the servant of peace, if we all work on a nationalist and competitive model. The failure of the Chicago Conference may have destroyed the hope of creating any world-wide organisation that could remove the risks of competitive nationalism. But that does not debar us from seeking a more constructive solution in Europe, or from building up in concert with Australia, New Zealand and India (and if possible with the Dutch and French also) a common international service for Asia and the Pacific region. The case for this does not rest on negative grounds—the risks of friction and militarism—though these are in everyone's mind. We prefer to argue that peace means positive co-operation.

We can imagine no better way of cementing nation to nation and fostering the recognition of the common interests of mankind than by organising civil aviation on the basis of international operation and ownership. For that Australia and New Zealand are eager, and we should expect the French also to welcome it. A creative opportunity has been missed that may never come again, and vested interests entrenched which it will be difficult in the future to dislodge. It is deplorable that Labour Ministers should have made this last concession to a dying Coalition. Their assent will make it immeasurably harder for the Labour Party to advocate the only solution consistent with its doctrines—the socialisation of civilian flying in concert with such of our European neighbours and the Dominions as are willing to join us in building an international service.

# A LONDON DIARY

WHAT did Mr. Churchill mean? I doubt if he really expects Labour Members to join in a new National Government if the Tories win the election. He might be quite glad if one or two did, but in any event he gains a nice propaganda point by telling the electorate that it is Labour which wants to go back to party government. In fact of course the Tories are quite as determined as Labour on fighting as a separate party. Neither side would dream of committing themselves to any kind of coalition before the fight; in a party struggle the protagonists must both go out for full victory. In so far as there is substance and not only propaganda in his remarks about a coalition, I think Mr. Churchill has in mind that (apart from some erstwhile Liberals like Lord Simon), Sir John Anderson, Lord Leathers, Lord Woolton, Sir Andrew Duncan and a number of others could be brought in as men who are not technically Conservative, but whose presence would not arouse misgiving in Tory breasts. People who call themselves "non-political business men" are always Conservative. Such a "coalition of the Right" is certainly possible. But I can hardly believe in the continuation of Conservative-Labour union. The effect would be to split the party that accepted minority status in the government of its opponents. Labour learnt what that meant in 1931, and would not repeat the experience, while the Conservative party, since the days of Peel at any rate, has never cared enough for any positive policy to risk division in its own ranks about it. If Labour should find itself compelled to form a government without an adequate majority, it would have to seek additional backing not among Conservatives, but among some of the more radical Liberals, and among the Communists and other Left groups, or progressive Independents.

* * *

I have now received from two first-hand sources an astounding picture of overcrowding in a famous naval depot. There are nearly three times as many men in the barracks as in peacetime; most, like one of my informants, are waiting to be posted to ships or other shore establishments. Naturally, it is quite impossible to find work for them all. So, he says, "hounded out of the messes, these men spend their working hours in a continual skulk round the Barracks, hiding away in lavatories, clothing queues or walking up and down the drill shed." His mess is 120 feet by 30 feet; over eight hundred ratings have to make this their home. Lockers, where all their kit must be kept, only number four hundred, so this "dingy, ill-lit and smoky room crammed with men who must stand or sit literally shoulder to shoulder," is further burdened with the kit bags of half of them. To do their laundry, four messes (over three thousand men) have to use forty bowls—and most of them are without plugs. Sleeping conditions are just as inadequate. A majority of the ratings sleep in a tunnel used as a raid shelter. My acquaintance has a good word for the recreational and sport facilities, but these again are so overworked and overcrowded that only a fraction of the men can enjoy them. The depot cinema, for instance, is forced to close its doors save to those with a pass to go out of the depot. Efforts by the station authorities to introduce excellent features like an Information Room with books, pamphlets, posters and so on break down because there simply is not enough room for those who wish to use it. Ninety men can get in at a squeeze. The monotony would be somewhat relieved, my informant says, if more

ould be done in the way of current affairs and iscussion groups. But the main picture is of an most unbelievable boredom and waste of time.

* * *

From what sources, asks the *News Chronicle*, ertinently, are we to find the engineers, chemists, rchitects and surveyors whom the Ministry of abour is trying to recruit for the Control Comission in Germany? Will not technicians of hese types all be urgently needed for post-war econstruction jobs in this country? The answers, should have thought, are, respectively, "God nows" and "Yes." We are not too well off r men with good technical and scientific qualifiations; and to send second-rate people to upervise German industry and research during he Occupation period would be futile. Here, I uggest, we are likely to pay the penalty for our logically cavalier treatment of hundreds of anti-Nazi German experts who have loyally served he Allied cause in this country during the war. Many of these men, who have a unique knowledge f the problems likely to arise, would be willing o take employment in the Control Commission even under the military Commander during he first phase of occupation. But they insist, s a condition, on receiving British citizenship. fter all, they have burnt their boats so far as he country of their birth is concerned, and—ithout a British passport—they might not naturally feel that they were returning to ermany as hireling traitors, which they are ot. Our American allies recognise six months' ervice in the U.S. Army as constituting a title o American citizenship. We have accepted ermans in the British Army but have given ommissioned rank to very, very few—and then o matter what their qualifications or aptitudes) nly in the Pioneer Corps.

* * *

The request of the three Medway towns for malgamation into a county borough raises a ey question about the future of local government this country. It was quite clear from the cent White Paper that this Cabinet is content leave things very much as they are; but the ad was left open for the creation of new county oroughs in suitable cases. But what is now suitable case? For the last fifty years this rocess has gone on, filching the richer urban reas away from the control of the county councils ntil the map of England is blotted with autoomous towns which contribute nothing directly the services required by the less populous ountryside around them. The county councils e left to provide hospitals, roads, schools nd so forth for districts that look like uncompleted jigsaw puzzle. At first sight here is an obvious case for putting three townhips which are really the same place under a ommon authority—you can then iron out all he tiresome anomalies in rates, utility charges nd standards—but the consequences to the unty as a whole can be very harmful though ss obvious. The sensible thing would be a eorganisation of local government so that places ke Rochester, Chatham or Gillingham could ave the local democracy they rightly desire without destroying all links with Kent as a region. his is a big job, but sooner or later we must t down to it. The longer we wait, the more sted interests there will be to oppose it.

* * *

From a friend just back from a visit to France outh of the Loire I get a depressing picture of orsening conditions. A vicious circle is in peration: transport chaotic because there is no ontrol from the Paris administration, and no entral control because of transport chaos. Food short in all the larger towns and the black market ore vigorous than ever. In Lyons my friend ound that a large British-owned concern was aying its employees partly in francs and partly bicycle tyres, which could be readily exchanged r food and clothes in the local black exchange nd mart. Only by a breach of the Truck Acts, or whatever is their equivalent in French law, could the workers be enabled to supplement their (quite inadequate) official rations.

* * *

The other day British soldiers on the German front were surprised by the arrival of a shower of Russian leaflets. On examination they turned out to be German propaganda to Russian soldiers. Why were they shot into the British lines? An example of German thoroughness. The night before a group of British soldiers had sung the Volga Boat Song.

CRITIC

## THIS ENGLAND

**A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. D. Crichton.**

**Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

"There are too many who see the Conservative Party as a class party, and we want to show them it is not a class party." This fact is too often forgotten both by Conservatives and their opponents. And this in spite of the fact that the Party sacrificed every hope of immediate political advantage in 1939 in its championship of the democratic cause.—*Daily Sketch.*

Goldfish lover would like to contact Cross Hills Gentleman who has aged gold fish in basement.—Advert. in *Keighley News.*

WILSON: It's got everything: Song and Dance, Vaudeville, Bands, Love, Thrills and Drama. A million pounds worth of entertainment. Advert. in *Surrey Comet.*

## ACCIDENT IN THE ALLIED CAMP

(After Robert Browning)

You know Remagen Bridge was seized
A week or two ago—
The High Command was hardly pleased,
It almost wrecked the show.
The bridge they thought as good as blown
When Ike's assault began;
Allied Headquarters had their own
Supreme strategic plan.

They said they scarcely would expect
An independent line,
Although their plan did not neglect
The crossing of the Rhine.
Remagen Bridge should have been wrecked
according to design,
For things in warfare are not done
In this haphazard way.

SHAEF courier galloped to the ridge
Where Hodges with his troop
Stood looking on Remagen Bridge,
And cried "Regroup, regroup!"
The spearheads that advance too far
Imperil all the flank—
Blow yonder bridge while yet you are
Upon the western bank.

The whole concerted war machine
Together must advance,
You dare not take an unforeseen
And accidental chance.
The Field Commander must not flout
The Allies' master plan;
SHAEF will arrange a news blackout—
Retire now while you can.

O then the eagle eyes flashed fire
Above that scene of strife,
And General Hodges bark "Retire?
No, not on your sweet life!
Great snakes! I've crossed the Rhine," he cried,
"There lies our new bridgehead."
And sinking at the General's side,
The man from SHAEF fell dead.

SAGITTARIUS

## RUSSIA'S NEW HOMES

(From our Correspondent in the U.S.S.R.)

AFTER three and a half years of war the Soviet Union's rehousing problems assume dimensions that would appal any but Russians, used as they are to immense long-term planning schemes. In liberated areas a great percentage of houses are totally destroyed (the percentage of public buildings is naturally much higher since the retreating Germans deliberately blew up these whenever possible). In ruined Stalingrad only 5 per cent. of the houses are capable of being repaired, and even now, two years after the German surrender, the majority of the diminished population is still living in cellars and the famous dugouts of the Volga bank. Liberated areas generally, and their industrial towns in particular, will have first priority in rebuilding schemes; this decision is inspired as much for economic necessity as for humanitarian reasons since adequately housed workers will naturally produce more than those living in dugouts or temporary barracks.

Some of the unblitzed towns have a housing shortage nearly as acute as devastated areas. Despite official restriction on the numbers coming into the capital, Moscow's population has increased during the war by at least a million. For the last three years building has been at a standstill. In the Urals, where so much industry was evacuated at the beginning of the war, overcrowding seems even more serious. Here a good start has been made in transferring families from temporary barracks to newly-built flats and cottages, but it will be years before factory workers, many of whom will not return to the west, are adequately housed.

"We've been concentrating mainly on two things—collectivisation of agriculture and development of heavy industry," Russians say, and usually add, the "in view of this war it's a good thing, both for us and for the Allies generally, that we did so." Now, with the passage of time, the increase in population and the ravages of war, the housing problem has reached monumental proportions. "In the next ten years," says Professor Alabyan, Vice-President of the Academy of Architects, who is also in charge of replanning Stalingrad, "we will have built a billion square metres of living space, or roughly twenty-five million houses. The Academy of Architects, along with the Commissariat of Building, is now preparing a gigantic planning scheme which will cover the whole U.S.S.R. and which will have sections in each Republic. Haphazard buildings are useless; we must tackle the problem from the beginning, which means starting by building factories to produce construction material. In every large region we propose to establish Combinats—groups of factories producing bricks, cement, glass, paint, waterpipes, sewerpipes, nails, plumbing fixtures and prefabricated parts such as walls, doors, window frames. First, of course, we shall have to make machine tools to produce all these things. We want to mechanise processes of painting, plastering, sawing and planing. So we start by building factories to make tools to produce construction materials to build houses. The establishment of these Combinats will take time." Alabyan continued, "But even if there were no house-building at all for the first two to three years, we would still save time in the end. We shall economise in workmen, too, for when industrial methods are used house-building requires less labour in general and also less skilled labour."

A Government commission on architecture now covers the whole Soviet Union, two hundred and fourteen planning organisations employing more than a thousand architects. Building plans for 140 towns were drawn up last year, and 315 more plans will be completed in 1945. In every republic new architectural schools, from higher technical institutions to vocational schools for training in exterior and interior decoration, are also opening this year. Throughout the liberated areas courses are established to train

builders to make up for the scarcity of skilled workers. Stalingrad has 35,000 of these part-time or full-time volunteers, mostly Komsomols.

In the midst of the long-term building plans the State has made a concession to the urgency of housing needs in the shape of prefabricated wooden houses, the lifetime of which will be about fifteen years. These frame cottages on brick foundations will account for ten to fifteen per cent. of the total housing plan. Russian pioneers of prefabrication were the Building Trust of the Commissariat of Aviation Industry, who were obliged to build in the quickest possible time large numbers of houses for skilled workers evacuated to the Urals. In view of its previous experience the Aviation Industry's help was called in when the population started pouring back to Stalingrad. Six hundred families of executives and best workers of the "Red October" factory, Stalingrad, are now rehoused in bungalows built in record time by the Aviation Building Trust's Shock Brigades. One of these prefabricated cottages has been erected in the neighbourhood of Moscow for inspection by the other Commissariats which are expected to take up the idea and start producing the necessary parts in their own factories. The show house is a pleasant looking small bungalow with red brick base, cream-painted wooden walls, side veranda, white pillared porch and steep grey tile roof with overhanging eaves. And it was built in thirty working hours—from digging of foundations to screwing in of last electric bulb and placing of stone flower urns on lawn. The house was built to a timetable by a brigade of forty Stalingrad workers, of whom nineteen were skilled artisans. It consists of bedroom and kitchen to the right of the hall, second bedroom to the left and a bathroom at end of hall. Since the whole floor space is only fifty square metres the rooms are very small. The house is heated by tiled wood-burning stoves let into the walls so that one stove warms two rooms and hall; central heating would involve construction of cellar, so increasing construction time. The living room, the walls of which are coloured plaster applied mechanically, has a French window leading out to a veranda. All windows naturally have double panes. The rooms are lighted by a big central globe, and there is an electric wall-plug for radio, lamps or kettle. Cooking apparatus is wood-burning brick stove which Russian housewives have used for generations. Nowhere is there a built-in cupboard or even shelves, and the loft which runs the whole length of the house can be reached only by placing a ladder against the outside wall. The small sink in the kitchen, and the bathroom wash-basin, have only a cold water tap, the hot water supply coming from the wood-burning geyser which runs into the bath. As a result the laundry must be done in the bathroom. The plumbing fixtures are very plain—there is no gleaming nickel and porcelain—but main point is they are there, and the new householder will no longer have to use the communal lavatory or go to the public baths for a weekly scrub.

Such is the standard of a Russian prefabricated cottage. To the British housewife it might not seem very tempting, but to the Russian family, who have moved in from a single crowded room or a cubicle in barracks or a hole in the ground, it looks like paradise. "Do not imagine," said the Chief Engineer of the Building Trust, "that we think this a perfect house. If we added all the improvements I would like to see, the house would take much longer to prefabricate and erect. Our main job at the moment is to get roofs over people's heads and to give them warmth, privacy and space."

In addition to the State and municipal schemes there is a widespread campaign, chiefly in the rural districts, for the individual building of homes. The State gives the individual house-builder credit for anything up to ten thousand roubles, repayable within seven years. Two hundred and fifty-seven million roubles are the State funds allocated for this purpose last year. In country districts the peasants have always built their own cottages, doing everything from the digging of the foundations to the elaborate wood-carving round the windows. The only "expert" required is the stovemaker. Now, however, the peasant who is in a hurry to provide his family with a home will be given prefabricated parts such as window-frames, doors and floors. In every region there will be a model village built by the State which the amateur housebuilder will be able to visit and study. One such projected village in the Kalinin district will have fifty cottages, a club, school, kindergarten, post office, bathhouse and fire station. It will be wired for electricity and for the Moscow radio station, will be surrounded by orchards and have a park with an open-air theatre.

Industrial workers in devastated areas who wish to build houses are being helped not only by the State but also by their factories, which allot a percentage of their construction materials to the individual builders and organise delivery to the site of the future houses. One progressive factory is giving houseless employees iron for the roofs, bricks for the door and window handles at cost price. The same factory employs a building expert to advise its workers, and has established a department producing simple furniture such as tables, chairs and shelves. Such measures, approved but not enforced by the State, depend mainly on the initiative of the factory executives and the activity of local Communist organisations, and are pointed out by the Soviet newspapers as shining examples to be followed. But a real construction programme cannot get under way till the end of the war, when war factories can be converted to peacetime production, and Red Army men, having finished one job, will roll up their sleeves for the next one.

## WHY SMALLER FAMILIES?

WHY are people having smaller families nowadays? What are their real reasons?

Under the auspices of the Rockefeller Trust, a psychiatric research project on marriage relationships is at present being undertaken in this country. It is on a small scale; and of necessity has been limited to married couples in the reproductive age group, living in an urban area, and drawn from the artisan and working classes. Within this framework and dependent on the voluntary co-operation of those approached, it is as close an approximation to the random sample as is possible where human beings are concerned.

It is my assignment to obtain the genetic, psychiatric, and sociological data on which the study will be made. In other words, I ask people to tell me something about their family, their own life history, and their views on certain subjects including that of family limitation. Interviews with husbands and wives are separate and personal, and care is taken to avoid all prompting or bias.

The first thing that must be realised is that parenthood is now a conscious choice. This is so, even though we are dealing not with the educated middle and upper classes, but with men and women who have left school at 14 and for the most part have neither read nor had opportunity for formal education since. Even the most stupid and unintelligent understand the possibility of control, however unsuccessful or indifferent they may be in practice.

Yet a deeper motivation must be sought than the spread of new knowledge about contraception, as almost 90 per cent. of those interviewed relied on a method which dates back to history and is common to all countries and civilisations. People know this themselves, and rarely cite birth control as a *cause* of family limitation. It is rather in the social and psychological environment provided that the main influences lie.

The reason most frequently given for having fewer children is "Money." This was mentioned by both men and women more than twice as often as any other factor, including war. Yet it is clear they are thinking, however dimly, not so much in terms of actual cash income as in new standards of living. Propaganda, Government or otherwise, directed towards improved nutrition and health; public discussions on housing; advertising in the fields of dress and domestic appliances; the films; all these tend to raise peoples' ideas of the desirable minimum. This feeling finds expression in remarks like: "Things were cheaper in olden days" (G.P.O. labourer) "The cost of living has gone up and wages haven't kept pace with it" (milk roundsman) "There were no outside pleasures in the old days and large families didn't matter" (fireman) "Women like to see their kids look nice" (bricklayer's wife).

Money comes up again in connection with education, and with training for future employment. Everyone is determined to give their children "a better chance"; and counting the cost in maintenance, if nothing else, of an extra two years at school, or during a lengthy apprenticeship they realise they may achieve their ambition for one or two, but not for half a dozen. This is reinforced by the experience of poverty and "hard times" many people have known in their own childhood, especially if they were members of large families. "I'd be afraid to see my children suffer like we did," said a cabinet maker whose mother had had 22 pregnancies. His wife herself one of nine, took a similar view.

The unemployment of the 1920's and early 1930's is still fresh in people's minds, and the cautious, not to say sceptical attitude is taken towards the prospect of post-war employment. "You've no guarantee of a good living wage" (male nurse); "If there isn't enough work to go round, there's no point adding to the population" (clerk). Young married people who have seen their fathers standing month after month at "the Labour," aimless and frustrated, and their mothers hopelessly trying to make ends meet may well be forgiven if they put the attempt to achieve some material security before the less tangible satisfactions of parenthood. Incidentally this dependence on the "dole" or on public assistance is one of the most-cited reasons for parental discord.

Next to money, war. All the obvious difficulties are mentioned: separation; service overseas; bombs; higher expenses; reduced income; but what seems likely to be more potent in the long run is not so much what is actually being experienced, but the fear of some future repetition. The birth rate has risen during the War years. This, however, is mainly due to a high proportion of first births, and will have little effect on the estimated decline of population.

While men tend on the whole to take the attitude: "It's no sort of a world to bring children into," women's reaction is more personal and individual, perhaps because of their greater biological role in the production and care of children. One young mother, a former waitress, told me "women don't want to bear boys because it's all for nothing." She had counted up that she, her mother, grandmother, and two-year-old daughter had had "over a dozen wars between them" (i.e., the total of their individual experience). Another young woman, factory worker before marriage, when asked why people have fewer children nowadays, remarked bluntly "They think it's waste of time. The Government takes them as soon as they grow up."

The desire for freedom is another influence at work, and one which is increasingly fostered in a competitive society. Urban life provides, in Titmuss's words, "a range of frothy and glittering alternatives to parenthood"; and if many prefer to expend their income on the cinema, the dog track, football pools, and the wares of the hire purchase salesman, instead of on the upbringing of children, they are only fitting into what they see around them and to what is held up as material success. Yet it is not so much "freedom from" that people want, as "freedom to." Not childlessness, but help with the social and economic drawbacks that a family entails. Not the quest for selfish enjoyment, not evasion of responsibility

but greater opportunities for recreation and interests outside the home. The more intelligent of these potential parents have glimpsed something of social change, and know that community resources could be developed which would make less marked the present difference in ways of living between the childless and those with young families.

Women feel the loss of freedom most, and give this very often as the principal reason. "They don't like being tied down" (factory machinist); "Girls want to have the same time after they are married as they did before" (clothing worker); "Women don't want to lose their independence, and hate asking for money" (domestic servant). The difficulty of not being able to go out together in the evenings after children had come was frequently mentioned by both men and women. A former chocolate-dipper, now the mother of two boys, and with intelligence considerably above the average of the sample, attributed the break-up or failure of many marriages to this inability of wives to go about with their husbands and share their interests. She wanted the Government to provide more crèches and nurseries where children could be left, especially at week-ends. And why shouldn't places like cinemas and dance-halls have nurseries attached too?

This feeling that parents are being penalised is widespread; and many are indignant that "they" want you to have more children when there is so little practical encouragement. "It's the Government who want the big families: not us. They should take more of the expense, and make a woman's life easier" (department store parcel sorter); "They're not trying to help you when baby clothes are taxed and couponed" (plasterer's wife).

Housing difficulties, like those of war, are fairly often brought forward; but though urgent, they are less fundamental than is often made out. Ill-health of one or other partner surprisingly takes a place almost as high as housing in frequency of mention. A few cite age at marriage or marital difficulties, but these are exceptions and of personal rather than general significance.

There is considerable divergence of opinion about Family Allowances. Some think they would encourage parents to have more children; others (the majority) believe they would make no difference. Even those who are in favour qualify their approval by saying that the allowances would have to be adequate. "5*s.* or 10*s.* a week isn't going to do any good" (clerk). "Family allowances would help people living in poor districts who have big families" (hairdresser), but would not have influenced his own decision only to have two children. "It's all a matter of education and surroundings." I myself believe that while family allowances are to be advocated on humanitarian and social welfare grounds, they are no answer to a declining birthrate. Neither this, moral or patriotic exhortations, prohibition of contraceptives or all the totalitarian armoury will make any difference. The real problem is that of changing a social attitude.

Biological drives are still strong enough to ensure the continuance of the one or two child family (everyone in the sample wanted *some* children) but numbers in excess of that will not be produced unless new incentives are found, and some of the obstacles to parenthood removed. Fear and insecurity, psychological inheritance of the 20th century, are not to be exorcised by superficial measures; nor will women easily be persuaded to relinquish their new possibilities of freedom.

Alva Myrdal, the Swedish sociologist, in her comprehensive and fascinating study of the population problem in Sweden, says: "Influencing the whole structure of modern social life may be the only effective way of controlling the development of the family institution, including the factor of procreation." After 15 months' field-work on the subject in this country, my conclusion is the same.

MOYA WOODSIDE

# DESPERATE REMEDIES

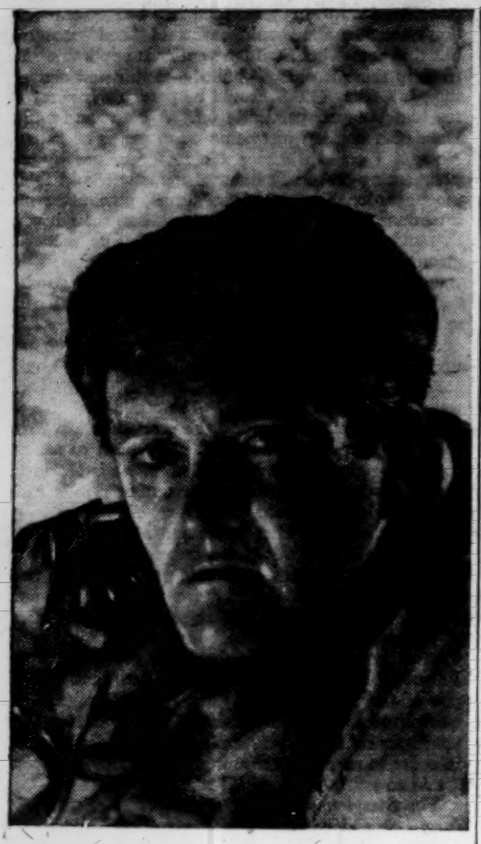
*THE Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* which the Arts Theatre actors are now performing at The Arts Theatre Club in Great Newport Street, was first acted at Malvern in 1935. There, some readers of THE NEW STATESMAN will remember, that a Shaw Season was held during successive summers, and these performances I occasionally attended as a grumpy old admirer; one by no means disposed to accept his latter-day plays as wonderful from top to bottom. Malvern became for a short time a sort of Bernard Shaw Bayreuth. The audiences struck me as over-enthusiastic over plays clearly inferior to those of his prime, and the atmosphere was too balmy for my taste. Moreover, some of these latter plays were infected with the infernal *Führer-prinzip*, then so active everywhere abroad. Recall *On the Rocks*, its conclusion and its Preface. The Preface advocated "killing as a political function": "What we are confronted with now," it stated, "is a growing perception that if we desire a certain type of civilisation and culture we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit into it." It recommended "Liquidation" as the right way of dealing with the "unsatisfactory"; "it is only weeding the garden." An approved example given was that of "the unfortunate Commissar who as Minister of Transport found himself obliged to put a pistol in his pocket and with his own hand shoot stationmasters who had thrown his telegrams into the dustbin instead of attending to them, so that he might the more impressively ask the rest of the staff whether they yet grasped the fact that orders are meant to be executed." Note the placing of the adjective "unfortunate." Others (among them the children, wives and friends of some incompetent stationmaster) might be more inclined to apply it to the victim himself than his executioner; for life can be precious also to the incompetent, and the incompetent dear to others.

In *On the Rocks* the old democrat who has striven all his life for universal suffrage and found it has not led to the millennium, was made to say: "It took the heart out of old Hipney; and now I'm for any Napoleon, or Mussolini or Lenin or Chavender" (the chief politician in the play) "that has the stuff in him to take both the people and the spoilers and oppressors by the scruff of their silly necks and just sling them into the way they should go with as many kicks as may be needful to make a thorough job of it." It was too early (1933) for Hipney to add "Heil Hitler." The same doctrine was put into the mouth of Sir Arthur Chavender. He is made to confess that he himself is not ruthless enough to play the part of the saviour of society, adding, "I shall hate the man who will carry it through for his cruelty and the desolation he will bring to us and our like."

I am writing in the parlour of a pleasant public-house beside a small fire. Four jolly tars have just come in, their caps pushed back from their healthy, shiny, vacant, handsome faces. They have ordered pints and are presently going into the next room to play pool. A heavy commercial gent on a high stool leans across the bar drowsily reading an evening paper. So, counting the plump, prompt, bored barmaid herself, there are seven of us here; and glance within and a glance around tells me for certain sure that we ought to be "liquidated." From the point of view of establishing a Communist Utopia we are one and all useless. To say we don't care a fig about mankind would be perhaps an exaggeration; but the condition in which men may be living on this globe at some distant date occupies our thoughts and emotions very little and very seldom compared with our personal satisfactions and the happiness of those near to us. Those four sailors are risking, and willingly, their lives for their "country," though they don't know exactly what they mean by that. They would probably also take risks to rescue anybody who fell into the Thames which I can see flowing past the window. But if you told them to risk themselves in order that a number of unborn beings might some day be better off they would tell you to go to hell. The heroine of another of Shaw's later plays, "The Patient" in *Too Good to be True*, cries out in the process of her conversion to the Life Force that she and those around her are merely "walking machines for turning good food into bad manure." I don't see why she should have said "bad" manure, but that somewhat Swiftian verdict is applicable also to us in this room, and—hullo!—to this new arrival; though I fancy G.B.S. would be particularly sorry to see him bumped painlessly off. A black and white Dalmatian dog has just come up to me to be patted. Now, if I could discover a cure for cancer by experimenting on him, I know that Shaw would think me unpardonably wicked and cruel, attributing my intentions merely to unconscious sadism; though why that should be more cruelly wicked than to shoot an incompetent stationmaster in order that a state railway might run better in future, I do not understand. "Yes, spotted animal, judged by any contribution to world-betterment you are likely to make, your existence cannot possibly be excused. You're just a charge upon the community; true, a lighter one than I, still someone has to feed you. And do you live for your puppies's puppies's puppies? I'm afraid not. Come here, I'll scratch you behind the ears and whisper in them a secret: *no more do I.*' I've been to see an amusing, rather faulty play called *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*, which the author rightly calls "a vision of judgment," and we are both for it. Instead of running after bones and bitches or sitting by the fire—those things are merely doggish, or, to put it frankly, hoggish—you ought to be striving that in the future dogs should have more bitches and bones. No, that isn't quite right. Say, rather, that at long last dogs should be born which do not want such things; though what they'll be wanting instead I'm not clear. Anyhow, you be off now, and talk to one of those sailors. Only for Heaven's sake don't worship him. He's only human like you. Never take your eyes off the Life Force, though you don't see it, in order to take into account a mere man. Tell him I said so and see what he'll say."

*The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* (farce in form but serious in content) is a bright and ready impromptu product of Shaw's imagination. It is not of much value itself, but it is interesting from the point of his development. It is quite well acted at the Arts Theatre. Indeed, unless by a piece of rare luck the part of the Oriental priestess could be taken by a quite enormously impressive woman (Miss Paget-Bowman as Prola was, by the way, excellent), I doubt whether much more could be made of the play than the present cast actually do. The comic naturalism of such parts as the shanghaied curate, the colonial governor and his wife, the redeemed emigration officer, the pert little female tourist, only required from their interpreters some humour and enough professional intelligence to keep it within bounds, and thus allow the jokes (all are not very good) to make their effect. Pra, the priest, must be calm, dark and handsome; and Mr. Dignam was. The less the apocalytic angel acts, and the more his behaviour resembles that of a guest arriving at a garden-party with interesting news, the more will the audience enjoy his coming out of the sky, his nightgown and white woolly wings, and the fact that this is indeed the Day of Judgment. Tall Mr. Shine, with his fair moustache and social composure, met these requirements; just as, previously, Mr. Peter Jones, as the Simpleton or Curate, had exhibited just about the right amount of natural embarrassment on finding that he had to marry both the island lovelies, and not only the one he had at first fancied most. Let me explain.

This island, a British possession, is inhabited also by a pair of Oriental sages, man and wife. Like other characters in Shaw's drama who live on a higher plane, they exercise an irresistible sex-attraction over ordinary mortals, and in this case they take advantage of the infatuation they inspire respectively in the male and female British to try a eugenic experiment and blend in their offspring the virtues of East and West. Twenty years pass. Physically, the offspring are all that could be desired. None will wonder that the Curate, deposited by pirates, fell for the two girls. But mentally and spiritually they are far from satisfactory; they have no conscience; that is why the priest and priestess insist on the curate, who is nothing if not scrupulous, mating both, thus introducing a little conscience into the stock, while as a religious man he should learn that sex is an entirely impersonal relation.



*"We're knocking the Japs out of the sky over here. Keep those War Savings sky high back there."*

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Issued by the National Savings Committee

On the stage these eugenic failures appear as allegorical figures, as "the four lovely phantoms who embody all the artistic, romantic and military ideals of our cultured suburbs"—Love, Pride, Heroism and Empire. No one, however, would guess this without being told. As Mr. E. Strauss points out in his *Bernard Shaw: Art and Socialism*, a book I am never tired of recommending, this fantastic play is to all intents a repetition, on an inferior dramatic level, of one of his very best, *Heartbreak House*; "For quite obviously Mrs. Hushabye is Love, Lady Utterwood is Pride, Hector Hushabye is Heroism and Sir Hastings Utterword is Empire." But they are living individuals and these mechanical dolls. Moreover, *The Simpleton* also ends apocalyptically, but with catastrophe treated in a very different spirit. Shaw had recovered his good spirits (perhaps he has again lost them since); the fountain of glorious gaiety in him has begun once more to spout and sparkle. His faith in the Life Force is again serene, in spite of the collapse of previous hopes.

Now, how interesting this is from the point of view of his changes as a creative dramatist! He begins by writing for the stage as a social reformer, as a Fabian showing up particular abuses. In 1903 I wrote of *Man and Superman*: "Eugenics seems the last hen-coop to which Mr. Shaw clings in the wreck of his hopes." Then follow miscellaneous dramas, till in *Major Barbara* the doctrine is preached that the only hope is to convert the Capitalists—the Undershafts and Bodgers.

The artist is still searching for the fundamental remedy. Of men being born again and born better we hear no more. Religion becomes more prominent and results in that splendid climax *Saint Joan*. Then another change: in *Back to Methuselah* religion is blent with the theory that the most vital thing is that men should outlive all their passions; and human being centuries old fill the world. Then the war of 1914: for the first time Shaw writes a tragedy, *Heartbreak House*. Lastly, the post-war period beginning with *The Apple Cart*. This now introduces the *Führer-prinzip*. And last of all *The Simpleton*. What now is the surviving basis of his hopes? Painless Annihilation of Unsuitables, for that, not punishment, of course, is Shaw's Day of Judgment. It is a remedy which can only be treated in a spirit of comedy, for looked at realistically there are too many objections to it.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

## MUSIC

### Hindemith's "Ludus Tonalis"

Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis* has just recently been played for the first time in England by the young pianist Mewton-Wood. It is the most considerable work of Hindemith's to reach England since the Symphony. Written for piano solo, it comprises a Prelude, 12 Fugues with 11 linking Interludes, and a postlude which is the prelude turned upside down and played from the opposite end. Hindemith describes the work on the title-page as: Studies in Counterpoint, Tonal Organisation and Piano Playing. I am not competent to judge the work critically as regards piano playing, and this is probably not in general its greatest interest. The matters of counterpoint and tonal organisation are best considered in relation to Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues, because Hindemith has written his *Ludus Tonalis* to exemplify his own theory of tones, just as Bach wrote the 48 to exemplify the musical advantages of an equal-tempered keyboard.

To take the matter of counterpoint first. As far as I can judge, Hindemith does not use a more complicated contrapuntal apparatus than Bach. He uses resources which appear to be adequate to his purpose, which did not include (I imagine) the extension or elaboration of the eighteenth-century fugal tradition, as you find happening in late Beethoven. One device common to innumerable earlier fugues is strikingly absent from the Hindemith examples, and that is the true countersubject, designed to be sounded with every entry of the subject after the first. A beautiful Bach example of such a fugue is that in C minor (Book I. 48). There is no technically comparable fugue in the *Ludus Tonalis*. A canon fugue such as the E flat major (Book II. 48), in wh the canons are exhausted mathematically, has parallel in this work. Hindemith uses canon quently, and most other similar contrapuntal devic but his fugues are necessarily not part of a lifetim output of such forms, to culminate in a *Kunst der F* The first fugue in the *Ludus* is a beautiful but v condensed triple fugue. Bach's triple fugue F sharp minor (Book II. 48) is as extended developed as Hindemith's is condensed.

Hindemith's theory of tonal organisation is set in his book "The Craft of Musical Composition." is probably the most important attempt yet made bring order into modern musical ideas, and to br the theory of music into line with contempor practice. We English are so untheoretical a race we are apt to undervalue such books. But composition teaching at our academies can eas become lamentably retrograde, and the young stude consequently suffer. The fact is that, however mu we may like it, the theory of harmony based on thi does not provide an adequate harmonic language the literary sense) to name, discuss, appraise or bla even some of the harmonic practices in the Preh to *Tristan*. Whether Hindemith has suggested theory which is both practicable and acceptable nee to be appraised by competent theorists. But who likely to do that except musicians really alive contemporary creative activity?

The little textbook of Two-part Counterpoint wh Hindemith has further issued is a really excelle manual for the study of how to write a clear, cle and strong line. It is particularly to be recommend to those students who find themselves drawn into t contemporary revival of linear sensibility. An ide complement would be a textbook on Engli rhythmical counterpoint, which is a portion of t European musical heritage specially traditional in t island. There is, for example, no rhythmical cont puntal freedom equal to that of Orlando Gibbons be found on the Continent. Here is a sensibil worthy of fresh cultivation.

The 12 fugues of the *Ludus Tonalis* appear in t order of notes which Hindemith finds to be m naturally derived from a given fundamental (Series of his book): C, G, F, A, E, E flat, A flat, D, B fl D flat, B, E sharp. The interludes are in the natu of genre pieces (they include a march and a wal which have the functions both of complementing t fugues, giving variety to the general texture of t work and modulating. With regard to the mirr prelude and postlude, in case one is persuaded of t necessarily unmusical nature of such a device, should be said that the beginning of the postlude- i.e. the first notes of the mirror music—is emotional one of the most significant moments of the work.

The general impression I get from this composit is of Hindemith's strong traditional sense and gre cultivation of sensibility. His music is eminent civilised, European and Classical. The material uses can be traced right back to the source of t entire classical European tradition—i.e. melisma plain-song and the metrical polyphony that develop out of it. It may be that through Tchaikovsky a others, Slav elements, for example, will enter th material and be assimilated to the classical tradition But that is not Hindemith's problem, which is gather up once again the pieces into which Europe music has fallen, around some fresh centre. (All h study of early polyphony is undertaken to th end.)

This great labour will gradually draw to itself t best musical minds, as is happening equally in th other arts. It is one of the more encouraging sig of these most difficult times. A unified sensibili in Europe will be the sign of a healed and unifie Europe.

One can hardly commend too highly the enthusias with which a pianist like Mewton-Wood undertak the work of preparation and performance of new wor such as the *Ludus Tonalis*. I found myself ve moved by the first performance at Morley Colleg and was sorry to have missed the second performanc at the Philharmonic Arts Club. I look forward hearing the work again at the National Gallery Monday, March 26th. If I have any criticism

offer of the playing of this work, it is that further performances should lead to increased attention to nuance within a stricter attention to Hindemith's dynamics. To my ear the opening of Fugue 5, for example, was too rough, and there is more tenderness in the interlude which follows than appeared. Mewton-Wood's great asset is a clean rhythm and a lovely purity of tone in the *piano* passages. I would like this quality to be more consciously studied, and if possible taken up through other gradations to the *forte*, which occasionally sounds to my ear too black. In this connection I am quite sure that *Ludus Tonalis* is meant for the more intimate performance of a smallish hall, where terrific tone is not required. It is excellent that Mewton-Wood intends to play this work on his coming tour of Australia. We look forward to his playing it a lot more in England after his return in the autumn.

MICHAEL TIPPETT

## RADIO NOTES

DEPARTMENTALISM, being one of the results of Original Sin, is a vice of all institutions, but it is especially obvious in the B.B.C., because the outcome is more manifold than elsewhere. Pride and Ambition, we are told, built the tower of Babel; and its motive power was simply turned to its own destruction. (I make a present of this theme to Louis MacNeice, who would, I feel sure, handle it dramatically, amusingly, and, above all, unexpectedly. Music by Roberto Gerhard.) The partial remedy is the kind of broadcast which demands the co-operation of two or more departments, and anyone can observe for himself how rarely this takes place. Producers would not be human if they were not ambitious, but I believe they would further their own, as well as the general, cause better if they resisted the temptation to fortify some little turret in Babel, complete with a cast of trusty retainers, and provisions to withstand a six-months' siege from the Controllers and Planners. Meanwhile, the latter bodies are, I should say, chiefly responsible for the timidity and mediocrity which are the endemic diseases of British broadcasting; like the officials of a Kafka novel, their enthusiasms and their vetoes are equally unaccountable, equally implacable.

So let us imagine—since we shall not get it—a glorious General Post, spread over several weeks of broadcasting time. Gerald Abraham would be invited to devote himself entirely to choosing recorded music for such plays and features as required it, while Gramophone Records would be looked after by a member of the Music Department. Louis MacNeice would edit and produce Variety. Stephen Potter might infuse new life into a neglected masterpiece like Rossini's *William Tell* (what a striking broadcast might be made of this opera!), thus releasing Mark Lubbock to produce a topical feature of the type usually written by Leonard Cottrell or Peter Watts. John Sharman and Harry S. Pepper might well have contributed a little freshness to last week's broadcast of Saint-Saëns' stale and worthless *Samson and Delilah*. One of the producers of the admirable Schools broadcasts (I shall return to this subject one of these days) would put on a big literary feature—say one of Stephen Potter's New Judgment series. And Mary Hope Allen might be asked to handle a series of talks, or even be coaxed into producing an adaptation of a musical comedy.

These suggestions are not made just to annoy, nor are they nearly as extravagant and frivolous as they look. Some such experiments have in fact been tried, with varying results; but the practice ought to be far less exceptional: a regular inter-departmental exchange would, I believe, go far towards demolishing those little costive fortresses with which the modern Babel is all too well stocked.

A first-rate talk on the Nineties by that prize-winning broadcaster, Compton Mackenzie. His reminiscences were amusing and to the point; they painted a lively picture of a period when intelligent people still knew how to enjoy themselves—an art which has since been almost entirely lost. I was glad, too, that the speaker gave that condescending book, *The Æsthetic Adventure*, a sound thumping. We of to-day are in no position to patronise the Nineties.

*South with Shackleton*, the latest "starred" programme, seemed to me a boss-shot. Material excellent, production vulgar and inept.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*March* 25. Francis Poulenc describes his new cantata (11 a.m.); "*Figure Humaine*" (Poulenc, 8.30).

*March* 26. "The Dream of the Rood" (Narrative Poem, 4.15); Book Talk by Wilson Midgley (6.30).

*March* 27. Birds and their Song (4.20); Elgar 'Cello Concerto (6.15); Desmond MacCarthy on Byron's *Childe Harold* (10.25).

*March* 28. Weber Concert Piece (Mewton-Wood and B.B.C. Orchestra, 7.15).

*March* 29. "The March Hare Resigns" (MacNeice, 7.25); "To Start You Talking—about Elections" (8.10).

*March* 30. Beethoven's 15 Variations (Clifford Curzon, 3.0); Bach's *St. John Passion* (Pt. 1, 3.40; Pt. 2, 7.20).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

## THE MOVIES

**"The Fighting Lady," at the Odeon**
**"Epaves," to be shown later**
**"The Tennessee Valley," and "Winter on the Farm," at the Academy**
**"Necessary Journey," M.O.I. documentary**
**"The Man on the Beat," "Student Nurse," "Steel," British Council Films**
**"The Man from Morocco," at Warner's**

All these films except the last are documentaries. The first three are in a class by themselves and any cinema would be worth a visit on their account. They aren't just the respectable academic essays, prettily unobtrusive, to which the documentary genre in its later phases may have accustomed us. Here is that core of poetry, drama and fact without which the film as an art would relapse into inanity. *The Fighting Lady* will have the effect, I trust, of killing all those two-hour fictions about an aircraft-carrier going on a secret mission which everyone, except the men concerned, guesses to be Tokyo: they are too busy talking to the photographs of their girls propped under the lamps by their bedsides. Every foot of *The Fighting Lady* was shot in action, often between bullets from the front of an aeroplane, and it is the most remarkable war documentary the Americans have made. Fascinating detail of the carrier-planes parked in rows on the deck, taking off and landing on a space smaller than a football field; the great underdeck hangar; guns of all shapes and sizes; air crews and boat ship's crew; pilots in their briefing room, bakers and launderers below. What a target, this floating airdrome, for a torpedo! That thought develops in intensity during the journey to the Pacific, and while we watch the balletic display of the deck master (right term?), who has an exact bodily gesture for every contingency, the blue seas and skies become more menacing. First attack by a Jap plane; it is shot down flaming. Objectives: Marcus Island, Truk, the Marianas. The camera takes us into the air over an island many thousand feet below; flak comes up, cannon flows down, till the air is alive with wriggling spirochetes interposed between the eye and the target; then the bombing dive over runways and grounded planes, broken off when the gunner takes his finger from the machine-gun stud. These scenes of aerial combat are indescribable. They are repeated; they grow in fury and calculation. And on the carrier the deck master nurses his planes to ground, sometimes with a wheel off, sometimes to turn turtle in flames. A pilot miraculously steps out of one of these wrecks: he has, we are told, two


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| TOTAL ASSETS | £132,812,792 |
| SHARE & DEPOSIT FUNDS | £125,206,791 |
| MORTGAGE ASSETS | £78,452,412 |
| LIQUID FUNDS | |
| *Trustee Securities* | £47,711,398 |
| *Cash at Banks and in hand* | £6,058,180 |
| Reserve Funds and Undivided Profit | £6,675,468 |

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GLASGOW - 119, ST. VINCENT STREET
LEEDS - - 32, COMMERCIAL STREET
LIVERPOOL - - - 37, DALE STREET
MANCHESTER - - 130, DEANSGATE
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**THOSE LEFT BEHIND**

Many who saw our wounded and blinded prisoners come home from Germany were in tears at the sight of suffering so bravely borne. But the first thought of the men themselves was for their comrades LEFT BEHIND. The war has no greater tragedy than the thought of young, active men spending some of the best years of their lives in captivity. Please send a donation NOW and get your friends to do likewise.

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hundred wounds from a shell burst. Pity and terror, not idle excitement, are the emotions that war should evoke and war films so rarely do. *The Fighting Lady*, I may add, is conventionally more thrilling than any thriller. Its lurid technicolor (16 mm. film) creates sometimes scenes of great beauty: for example, a black sea seen from above, on which the sun slowly flashes sequins.

The rest must be dealt with summarily. *Epaves* (coming shortly) is the documentary of wrecks on the Mediterranean sea-bed, as haunting as a ballade by Debussy; *The Valley of the Tennessee* (showing, with a homely-pretty M.O.I. piece, *Winter on the Farm*, at the Academy) comes from a series "The American Scene"—first-rate both in subject and treatment. Memorable also are two British Council films: *Student Nurse* for the unobtrusive drama of its operation sequence, *Steel* for its apparition of giant ingots in the furnace mouth. These films are crisply informative. The M.O.I.'s *Necessary Journey*—priority transport on the railways—would have been engrossing but for a dowdy speaker.

"Ees thaht you, Manuela—or just another sweet dumnable dream?" How they talk in *The Man from Morocco*, English thriller! Anton Walbrook glares at Margeretta Scott! "I see awl Spain in your eyes!" I saw only Welwyn Studios. No offence to Miss Scott, whose looks are the film's one asset.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### "The Winter's Tale," at Cambridge

The Marlowe Society productions, always enlightening, are specially welcome when the play chosen is, like *The Winter's Tale*, rarely performed. Written in Shakespeare's last period it shows him despising that mastery of dramatic construction and effect which distinguishes the tragedies, and equally negligent of characterisation. It begins abruptly with what seems the fourth act of a tragedy; it continues with an eclogue; and ends like a fairy tale. Leontes and Polyxenes are not individuals: one is jealousy at its most neurotic, the other paternity at its most tyrannical. The diction is often obscure, sometimes very beautiful. No other play, unless it be *Cymbeline*, leaves us so impressed by the enigmatic character of Shakespeare's genius. The youthfulness of the Marlowe Society cast gave a high charm to the junketing in Bohemia, and the Clown was played by a born actor, and the Autolycus by a born actor who is also experienced. One could not want more brilliant performances. The Leontes speaks verse magnificently, obsequious no less to the meaning than to the music of his lines; and one wonders how many professional actors could conduct one so unerringly through this labyrinth of language. "Stars, stars, and all eyes else dead coals!"—one's only regret was that Leontes had not more such lines to offer to the voice. Florizel also spoke uncommonly well, and as always in Marlowe Society productions even the least histrionic members of the company seemed to understand and enjoy what they were saying. The setting was exceptionally good.

# Correspondence

## INSIDE THE ASYLUM

*[We print this week a further selection from the many letters we have received on this subject.]*

SIR,—I read the article "Inside the Asylum" with great interest, and I admire the writer for various reasons. Firstly that as a voluntary patient he stayed in a hospital where he found so much wrong, secondly that he writes of his experience with restraint, and lastly that he does write of it with the sincere intention of remedying what he found.

But as a mental nurse I was left feeling that someone should correct what I believe to be a false impression of mental nurses both male and female. Your correspondent allows that the psychiatrists are "trying to do their best in impossible conditions." He gives the number of them on the staff, but what about the nurses? How many of them are there on the staff to care for 1,300 patients during the 24 hours of the day? The psychiatrists can get away from the ward when they are tired or their tempers frayed, but the nurses can't. The patients in the ward with your correspondent were a mixed, difficult group, but with one thing in common—the need of continuous observation. Mental hospital nurses are working long hours which are impossible to reduce because of the shortage of staff. This has increased during the war, but was existing for some time before.

The psychiatrist sees his patients one at a time, and calls on the nursing staff for help if he requires it; the patients he cannot see are left to the care of the nurses, who cannot simply shelve the matter and "concentrate on the short-term patients." Short- or long-term, they all have to be fed, bathed, etc., in conditions just as impossible, if not more so, as those which hamper psychiatrists. The shortage of staff is very serious.

Psychiatrists are hampered by the "dumb opposition" of the staff. The best way to overcome dumb opposition is by careful explanation and example in better ways of treating mental patients. From the article it is clear that the psychiatrists have much to do, but one of their tasks is to teach the nurses. There is a training for mental nurses which lasts three years, in the course of which nurses are taught first aid, anatomy, physiology, hygiene, and the methods of nursing both physical diseases and mental diseases. The examining body requires nurses to have attended only 15 lectures and 12 demonstrations each year. Since the war even this pitiful minimum has been difficult to give. Nurses have been unable to get away from the wards for their classes owing to the acute shortage of staff. Some nurses are unable to profit by training, and others, regrettably, unwilling to do so. Psychiatrists and senior nursing staff have been hard put to it to find time for teaching.

Patients were overcrowded before the war. In addition to this the E.M.S. hospitals have often been given the best wards and accommodation in the mental hospitals, so that mental patients have been appallingly overcrowded, with the inevitable consequences, and the work of nursing them rendered impossible.

I do not wish to whitewash faults, but to explain the circumstances in which mental nurses are working. For the most part they are ordinary men and women without the privileges of education and cultural background which might make the understanding and management of mental patients easier. Their kindness and patience with the most trying as well as the most helpless class of patient is as a rule beyond praise, *but there are not enough to do the work.*

Your correspondent hopes that in post-war planning mental hospitals and patients will not be forgotten. I have a plan in which, if you will, you can help. It is to show the public what mental hospitals are like in such a way that they will join the staffs, train as nurses, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, and actually help in caring for the mentally ill instead of merely pitying them and criticising those who, for all their faults, are doing the job. I wonder how many of your readers after reading "Inside the Asylum" felt that they must go and join up as mental nurses or encourage their sons and daughters to do so.

Reforms will not come overnight. Buildings are old-fashioned, sanitation often insufficient. Occupational therapy needs material much of which, if it is to be available to every patient, will be wasted. If reforms are wanted the public will have to pay. It is from among your readers that the staff will have to come.

It is not only an occasional patient who realises the faults. Most nurses feel as strongly about the conditions as your correspondent, most of them have ideals they would like to realise, but the first essential is more staff.

O. F. GRIFFITH,
S.R.N., R.M.N.


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SIR,—From my own experiences and from what I have heard, I think there is a distinction in treatment and general atmosphere between Army psychiatric units abroad and those at home. In Italy every effort was made to keep patients amused or employed in recreational devices, and the mental nurses were on the whole most helpful and considerate. Occasionally there would be an act of brutality on an orderly's part towards a patient, but this was exceptional. The psychiatrists were extraordinarily conscientious and were obviously working overtime to cope with the large numbers passing through their hands.

The hospital I entered on return to U.K. bore marked similarities to A.B.C.'s asylum; military discipline at its worst and most futile, and a general air of "you needn't think you're going to have an easy time just because you're a lunatic"! On the other hand, apart from periodic cinema shows and a few dull fatigues, no steps were taken to keep patients occupied. The male nurses were, with rare exceptions, loud-mouthed and overbearing, and never hesitated, in the absence of the psychiatrist, to employ violent methods by way of "treatment." One "delusional" patient believed that the hospital was in reality a Slave-trading Organisation. It would be interesting to know whether he suffered from that type of delusion before or *after* entering this hospital. He, of course, came in for a good deal of mockery from the orderlies.

The bright lights in this dismal picture are the psychiatrists themselves. Their individual treatment was, so far as my experience goes, excellent in every way; but they were so overburdened with work that they were clearly unable to deal with any but the broader issues of hospital administration.

E. L.

---

SIR,—I was very much interested in A.B.C.'s article. I take it his experience was of a public mental hospital and not a private one. Had he been able to afford 4 to 5 guineas a week to enter a private hospital he would have found conditions very different.

Having recently spent six months in a private mental hospital, as the result of a nervous breakdown, I can speak from experience. There was individual attention for all. When too ill to be up, we received careful, sympathetic attention and treatment. When convalescent everything was done to restore confidence and to encourage one to lead a normal, useful life again. Each morning there was an occupation class with varied activities. In the afternoon one could walk in the grounds and, by means of an excellent system of parole, reach the moors and neighbouring towns. The curative value of dancing was fully recognised. When well enough we attended dancing classes and a weekly dance, attended by male and female patients, doctors and nurses. There was a weekly film show, visits by parties of actors, whist and bridge drives, and Christmas festivities never to be forgotten. Great interest and pride were taken in one's recovery, even for some time after one left. Progressive private mental hospitals such as Scalebor Park and The Retreat, York, treat patients *who can afford it* in this way.

Very different were the stories told by patients coming from neighbouring public hospital. There, it was reported, patients who were well enough to be up were made to work almost to the point of collapse. There was no individual attention, no interest taken in the progress of the illness. It was my constant dread that if I did not make a quick recovery I should have to leave the private hospital and go to the public one. One case in particular distressed me very much. A young woman had to leave us before she was better because she could not afford to stay any longer. For six months she was at home, making no progress. She was finally persuaded to enter the public hospital. There she received no medical treatment, but was set to work at once. At the end of a fortnight she was in a state of collapse. She returned home, and seems now to be slowly pining away—all because she cannot afford to pay for the treatment which would restore her to health.

There is surely something wrong with a social system which allows such a difference of treatment for those who have the misfortune to become mentally ill. The treatment for a fracture or appendicitis is universally the same, and rich and poor alike can have it. Why, then, is mental illness not treated in the same way, irrespective of means?

GRATEFUL

---

SIR,—I read with interest your article "Inside the Asylum." As a Medical Officer in one I can only say that, broadly speaking, it is quite true. As criticism I would say that your correspondent has perhaps rated the doctors too high and the nursing staff too low. I have never had reason to suspect in the latter the type of attitude he depicts.

As Medical Officer I am expected to be on duty over 90 hours a week, and tend between 600–700 patients. In addition there are relatives' letters to answer, routine clerical work such as writing for extra food, filling casualty reports, etc., and assistance at operations. The stipend is £7 7*s.* a week. Reform is long overdue.

MEDICAL OFFICER

## ITALIAN PURGE

SIR,—I was astonished to read your remarks that in Italy "At every turn the efforts of the administration to carry out a thorough purge have been thwarted by Allied Control."

On what evidence do you base this statement? I have just been in Rome, where I had ample opportunities of discussing the situation with leading personalities, including the Allied Control and M. Togliatti, head of the Communist Party, and other Italians of various political parties, and on the basis of my information I believe your statement to be absolute nonsense. Your "decisive fact" about the new Italian Army would be ridiculed by M. Togliatti, or is he the villain of the piece?

House of Commons. STEPHEN KING-HALL

[The Roatta incident drew attention to the inability of the Bonomi Government to create a reliable administrative machine. In this it was hampered by the Allied Control, which would not allow it to purge the upper ranks of the bureaucracy. Only about one in ten of the prefects it wished to dismiss were in fact dismissed up to the end of 1944. An outstanding case was the rejection of its nominee for the mayoralty of Naples. We hope that Commander King-Hall's letter means that in recent weeks there has been some improvement in this matter. Togliatti, whose tactics are ultra-moderate, may be the strongest personality in the Cabinet. None the less, his Party joined in the popular demonstrations against the Government's failure to carry out an adequate purge.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

## THE NEXT STEP IN INDIA

SIR,—In your article, "The Next Step in India," published in your issue of March 10th, it is stated that the British Government are "committed to the policy of granting India the fullest measure of freedom as soon after the war as possible." A little later this view is restated in different words: "Britain's honour is pledged to a settlement with India and . . . she is committed to taking every possible step to make India a free member of the British Commonwealth." From this premiss the article proceeds to imply that it is obligatory on the British Government to find some means of proceeding towards this objective irrespective of the co-operation of the political parties in India or the ability of Indians to agree on the form of a future constitution for India.

It is a perfectly intelligible opinion that the British Government would be well advised to abandon the requirement that agreement must be reached among Indians as to the form of their constitution before


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KEGAN PAUL

a full transfer of power and responsibility is made to an Indian Government. But it is simply not in accord with fact to say that the British Government is committed to this course by any of its previous declarations or statements of policy. The British Government is committed to the aim of full Dominion status for India, and it has frequently expressed its desire to see that aim quickly realised. The Act of 1935, which still remains available whenever India is ready to use it, represented the considered views of the British Government as to the appropriate next step towards the goal. That proved to be an unacceptable measure. There have since been two main statements of the Government's policy—the Declaration of 1940 and the Cripps' offer of 1942. The Declaration of 1940 was quite specific, that, while H.M. Government wished to see a new constitution framed by Indians themselves, they could not transfer their responsibilities to a system of government whose authority was directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. The Draft Declaration of 1942 was, in fact, only an embellishment of the Declaration of 1940. It proposed a specific procedure for arriving at a new constitution framed by Indians and was therefore an attempt to facilitate agreement. To this end it included certain new proposals—the right to secede from the Empire, the right of Provinces to stand out of an all-India Union, and a treaty relationship between India and Great Britain. There was added to these provisions an invitation to take office under the existing constitution. But the whole of the 1942 offer was dependent on the concurrence of the main elements in India, and none of it constitutes a commitment until that is forthcoming.

The true position, therefore, is that the British Government are not in any way committed to give India Dominion status until a constitution has been found which is not unacceptable to the main elements in India. But an undertaking was given in the Declaration of 1940 to set up, after the conclusion of the war, with the least possible delay, a representative body to devise the framework of a new constitution. This is what the British Government are committed to. If Indians want Dominion status, their full co-operation will be essential when the time comes for consultation. ALFRED H. WATSON

29, Malvern Court,
London, S.W.7.

## ALBANIA

SIR,—May I be allowed to congratulate you for the timely and most sensible note on the Greek-Albanian frontier dispute, which appeared in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of March 10th.

The attribution of Southern Albania, which the Greeks called Northern Epirus, to Albania has been decided by four international inquiries at various dates between 1912 and 1924. The present frontier, drawn in 1922-24 by the International Boundary Commission sponsored by the League of Nations, at which Greece was represented by General Botzaris, has been accepted by the Greek Government as definitive and unchangeable. This acceptance has been reiterated in an official statement of the Metaxas Government at the eve of Mussolini's aggression against Greece in 1940.

The claim to Southern Albania as a national aim of Greek foreign policy was put forward by the Government of M. Tsouderos after it left Greece for London. From then on it has been repeated by the various Greek governments in exile, including that of Mr. Papandreou.

No serious argument has been brought in to justify such an indefensible claim. True, there is a small minority of about 30,000 people of Greek origin in Southern Albania (between Delvino and the frontier), but that cannot possibly justify the annexation of a territory amounting to one-fourth of Albania, with a population of nearly 300,000. So, as there is no ethnical ground to support the case, strategic considerations or historical rights are invoked, or even religion is brought in as a substitute for nationality. It must be remembered that there are about twice as many Albanians beyond the border, so that if the Greek Government want to have all their nationals within their frontiers, an exchange of populations can easily be arranged.

In spite of their strong case, the Albanians have gone so far as to accept the solution of a plebiscite under Allied supervision, provided the same is equally applied to all contested territories in the Balkans. Mr. Papandreou turned the idea down, alleging that the Greek population in Albania has been persecuted. If that were so they would more readily vote for Greece while not risking any reprisals. But the statement does not correspond to the real facts, which are that the Greek minority in Albania was placed under the ægis of the League of Nations. They had their own schools, churches, and even a deputy in the Albanian parliament. They enjoyed all rights as Albanian citizens, and many of them had good jobs in the State administration.

To conclude, Sir, I will say that I sincerely deplore this outburst of Greek expansionism, not only as an Albanian but mostly as a good European. Albania and Greece have all reasons to live as close friends, especially after this war. If that will not happen, it will not be for lack of good will on the Albanian side.

The Albanians hope that the Allies will do justice to their indisputable rights and spare them a new dismemberment which would spell their doom as an independent nation. As for a Balkan Federation, which, you rightly say, is the only reasonable and lasting solution, the Albanians will be very glad to join it. T. ZAVALINI,

Vice-President, Free Albanian Movement.
14, Chepstow Crescent, W.11.

## THE COUNTRYSIDE

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Robertson and Mr. Thompson there are doubtless many cottages in the country, as in the towns, below the standard required for decent living conditions, and there are many country cottages which conform with all the standards we should wish to see, though these, in private hands, are let at a permissive rent of as high as 6*s.* per week.

Unlike the townsman, the country labourer has his garden at his door and is within call for meals. On farms where dairying is carried out, free milk is almost universal and, in my experience, is not subject to seasonal cuts, and its value is a substantial subvention to the wages and not subject to income tax. I regret that Mr. Robertson impugns the food value of the potato, thus setting his opinion in opposition to that of the Ministry of Food.

With regard to the "Tied Cottage," can it be contended that it is "monstrous" to require a vacant cottage, which may be the only one available, for a new herdsman, and is it equitable that the dismissed employee should continue to occupy the cottage and work for someone else? Surely even Mr. Robertson can appreciate the difficulties in such cases and I would welcome his solution.

For his information I should explain that cottages are "tied" in order to provide agricultural workers with homes within a reasonable distance of their work. Unless this is done, with the present housing shortage they would have to travel long distances by cycle, bus or train and spend much time and fatigue in so doing.

C. E. H. MASTER

## JAMES PRYDE

SIR,—I am preparing a book on James Pryde which will consist mainly of illustrations of his paintings, preceded by an outline of his life and an appreciation of his work.

I shall be most grateful to hear from anybody who possesses any of his work, or who has information about him. S. JOHN WOODS

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DENT

# BOOKS IN GENERAL

Writers betray the generation that idolises them. I am thinking of those personal and egotistical writers who impose an actor's spell, whose slightest writings, diaries, letters, and so on, are lapped up eagerly by the public; who become confessors for their decade. D. H. Lawrence is an example. Before him there was Robert Louis Stevenson. The early readers of Stevenson were compelled by an excitement in his work which was the sustained sea wind of youth. They were taken by his pose. How masculine, heroic, adventurous and debonair he seemed; how dashing in his Bohemianism; how hardy and free in his moralisings; how engaging in all his attitudes. He flattered by the very trouble he took to give pleasure. And now, after our wars and revolutions, all that spell has gone. We smile at the insipid walking tours; Bohemianism seems to us mere soda water after the absinthe of the Continent: Stevenson is desperately genteel. And his exhibitionism embarrasses us. Only a very dull age, only a class of people who lived very protected and eventless lives and who were becoming uprooted from a whole-hearted way of living and a professional system of belief, could put up with Stevenson's arty adventures, his cult of Romance, and the rule-of-thumb moralisings on life and death. One does not blame Stevenson. Henley and even Wilde have similar traits. Sentimental, theatrical and second-rate, the words of Stevenson's *Requiem* are in a class with Henley's lines about being "master of his fate" and some of the verses of Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Kipling's moral histrionics may be added and—in a younger generation—the learned clownings of Chesterton and Belloc. Penny-plain, twopence-coloured—they all, a whole school of writers from Stevenson onward, created a highly coloured, cardboard world and hid in it from the dullness of rising suburban life. The cult of inns when inns were closed, the cult of beer when beer had started to become undrinkable, the cult of the chances of the open roads when not a soul or vehicle was to be seen on them if one excepted the suburban delivery van, the cult of the high style of writing when the high style of speaking had been dead for a hundred years—these random characteristics of suburban romanticism took their earliest impulse from Stevenson.

Or, rather, from the bad Stevenson of the occasional writings. I have read most of them during the last few months, turning to books like *Virginibus Puerisque* to see whether they would still excite me as they did in my teens, trying the books of travel like *The Amateur Emigrant* and *Across the Plains*, as well as the better-known accounts of Stevenson's holidays in France. It is true that one quality of Stevenson's never fails: he has the power to awaken in us the spirit of expectancy; he catches that feeling, peculiar to youth, which promises us continually some marvel, some surprise, just round the corner. And the very fact that his manner may be too laboured to be fresh is a youthful trait, tiresome and yet charming, in itself. But having said this, one has said the utmost. It is all frost, sun and the wind on one's cheeks, but no hunting. Stevenson is set for adventure, and nothing happens. With what inordinate conceit, with what twirling of the walking-stick he starts out; how mild and anodyne the events that follow. One has the impression, in books like *The Inland Voyage*, of Stevenson holding a mirror in front of his face as he goes along and practising gestures and grimaces there. The good descriptions of travel in Stevenson are not to be found in his essays of travel but in his letters.

> . . . . Yesterday, who could write? My wife nearly crazy with ear-ache; the rain descending in white crystal rods and playing hell's tattoo, like a *tutti* of battering rams on our sheet-iron roof; the wind passing high overhead with a strange dumb mutter, or striking us full, so that all the huge trees in the paddock cried aloud, and wrung their hands, and brandished their vast arms. The horses stood in the shed like things stupid. The sea and the flagship lying on the jaws of the bay vanished in sheer rain. All day it lasted; I locked up my papers in the iron box, in case it was a hurricane, and the house might go. We went to bed with mighty uncertain feelings; far more than on shipboard, where you have only drowning ahead—whereas here you have a smash of beams, a shower of sheet iron, and a blind race in the dark and through a whirlwind for the shelter of an unfinished stable—and my wife with ear-ache! Well, well, this morning we had words from Apia; a hurricane was looked for, the ships were to leave the bay by 10 a.m.; it is now 3.30 and the flagship is still a fixture, and the wind round in the blessed east, so I suppose the danger is over. But heaven is still laden; the day dim, with frequent rattling bucketfuls of rain; and just this moment (as I write) a squall went overhead, scarce striking us, with that singular, solemn noise of its passage, which is to me dreadful. I have always feared the sound of wind beyond everything. In my hell it would always blow a gale.

That is a hundred times better than the prinkings of *An Inland Voyage*—or the noticeably timid observations of *Across the Plains*. Stevenson was not the gregarious Bohemian of the vagrant life, despite his velvet jacket and long hair. He was at home among his own kind; away from them he was no Borrow, and a nervous, prim Scottish gentility put him on guard against strangers on the open road. Nor, in his egoism, was he the genuine disciple of Montaigne that he affected to be: Montaigne examined himself with ceaseless interest and humility; Stevenson examined in order to display. He was an exhibitionist, a dandy out to cut a figure.

The Stevenson of the novels and stories is a more composed and virile figure. Here he does not hide behind the famous untruth that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive, for arrival is indispensable to the novelist. One cannot just hope something will turn up in the course of writing. Stevenson's narrative is a thousand times stronger in his stories than in his essays, simply because he knows where he is going. I have already written in these columns about two of his novels: *Weir of Hermiston*, his last and unfinished work, which is also his one unmistakably serious book, sonorous and resolved; and also of *The Master of Ballantrae*, ambitious, well founded, as curious in its Calvinistic psychology as that old Scottish classic, *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. But the reader should not neglect *Kidnapped*, Stevenson's perfect book, small in scope but ringing along without a stumble from beginning to end. Unlike *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* is not purely a boy's book. There are constructed characters in it; there are moods, feelings, sensations. Then there is *The Wrong Box*, written with Lloyd Osbourne. This is an accomplished impertinence which slips down the throat as easily as an oyster. *The Wrong Box* fulfills the unrealised promise of the *New Arabian Nights*, a series of stories which were choked by Stevenson's mannerisms. *The Wrong Box* takes all the sins of Stevenson as a writer, and especially his artificiality, and turns them into virtues by its rapid frivolity:

> Mr. Brown's piano was speedily and cleverly got on board.
>
> "Well, sir," said the leading porter, smiling as he mentally reckoned up a handful of loose silver, "that's a mortal heavy piano."
>
> "It's the richness of the tone," returned Michael, as he drove away.

This genre is peculiar to English literature and reached its perfect expression in the fantasies of Max Beerbohm. Light literature is generally killed by the dating of its style and by its dependence on manners which have ceased to be amusing; but *The Wrong Box* is one of the few light books that survive their own period.

Those are the important works. Henry James, who wrote perspicaciously of Stevenson before *Weir* and *the Master of Ballantrae* were written, thought *Kidnapped* his best book. He pointed out that Stevenson was, above all, the novelist of youth. His egotism, his volatile spirits, his capacity to evoke the spirit of expectancy and a physical delight in the active world, his impatience of women, his undisguised feeling for Romance, are characteristics that engage happily with the definition. The attitudinising language is still festive in the early Stevenson. We do not notice, we do not care, that he has no subject in the underlying sense; that he has an eye only for the apparent and for what is going to happen round the corner. And then he has the capacity to describe not only the delights but the miseries of action. He is aware that the young are proud and afraid. The beauty of David Balfour's and Alan Breck's flight in the heather lies in the record of David's rival fears: his fear of Alan which is almost as great as his fear of the dragoons. This second turn of the screw is the making of the narrative, which somehow manages to fix every sprig of heather, every shadeless bush in our minds. I do not believe the hunted animal in man has ever been described with an equal vividness:

> The aching and faintness of my body, the labouring of my heart, the soreness of my hands, and the smarting of my throat and eyes in the continual smoke of dust and ashes, had soon grown to be so unbearable that I would gladly have given up. Nothing but the fear of Alan lent me enough of a false kind of courage to continue. As for himself (and you are to bear in mind that he was cumbered with a great coat) he had first turned crimson, but as time went on the redness began to be mingled with patches of white; his breath cried and whistled as it came; and his voice, when he whispered his observations in my ear during our halts, sounded like nothing human. Yet he seemed in no way dashed in spirits, nor did he at all abate in his activity; so that I was driven to marvel at the man's endurance.
>
> At length, in the first gloaming of the night, we heard a trumpet sound, and looking back from along the heather, saw the troop beginning to collect. A little after, they had built a fire and camped for the night, about the middle of the waste.
>
> At this I begged and besought that we might lie down and sleep.
>
> "There shall be no sleep the night!" said Alan. "From now on, these weary dragoons of yours will keep the crown of the muirland, and none will get out of Appin but winged fowls. We got through in the nick of time, and shall we jeopard what we've gained? Na, na, when the day comes, it shall find you and me in a fast place on Ben Alder."
>
> "Alan," I said, "it's not the want of will; it's the strength that I want. If I could I would; but as sure as I'm alive I cannot."
>
> "Very well, then," said Alan, "I'll carry ye."
>
> I looked to see if he were jesting; but no, the little man was in dead earnest; and the sight of so much resolution shamed me.

Stevenson restored the brisk and the direct to English narrative after the chronic digressions of the Victorian novel. He kept to a simplified world which was bounded by pleasure and pain and crossed by the Scottish conscience. He has a marked leaning towards sadistic characters and cruel situations. In the volume called *The Merry Men* there is a story called *Olalla*. Here, Calvinism puts on a romantic dress and steps out with horrifying suggestions of inherited madness and midnight cruelties. In *Weir* and *The Master of Ballantrae* Stevenson was fascinated by the romantic notion of pure evil. Sometimes the subject is the occasion of mere dramatic trickery: *Jekyll and Hyde* has no meaning: it is just Maskelyne and Devant. But in *The Master of Ballantrae* Stevenson has some serious theory of evil. And in the brilliant little ghost story *Thrawn Janet*—a story which has been rightly compared to Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale*—the pure evil is genuine. It comes straight out of Scottish folklore. The nearer Stevenson is to Scottish life and his roots the truer he rings. He has the romantic notion that evil is the dynamic agent in life; and in one story, *Will of the Mill*, a prose poem of idleness and passive wisdom, he has written an exquisite allegory praising the eventless life of somnolence and evasion. This is the most melodious of Stevenson's stories—a story as beguiling as *Rip Van Winkle*. It conceives man's life to be lived between two splendid and powerful societies, the kingdoms of the living and of the dead; and from

his seat on the mountain pass, between the kingdoms, Will watches the travellers go down, the coaches, the armies, wrenching the heart with their splendours, but never returning.

When all the praise and the blame are distributed, Stevenson remains only half a writer. He never fills out. He is too restless, too set on putting his best foot forward. Had he very little to say? Had he to eke it out by his cleverness with words? He seems too glib and cut off from his sources. The inability to draw women is not uncommon in writers devoted to action or to the hagglings of the conscience; but most novelists are at least able to project their sexual wishes in the figures of desirable heroines. Stevenson does not even do this. In one of his letters he attributes his inability to extreme sexuality. A man who is bent only on the sexual act in his relations with women sees only himself; he does not see them. Stevenson called this realism; but it is, in fact, an aspect of Calvinism. Like Scott, Stevenson sees in women little more than the domestic enemy and obstacle. The embarrassing poem he wrote about his wife, where he described her first as a piece of engineering and then as an armoury, is filled with masculine sexual symbols. The effect is perverse.

The narrowness of Stevenson's moral range, the tendency in his work for feeling to contract rather than to expand and fertilise the narrative, the escape into judiciousness and artificiality, dressing up and witty impersonations, may be traced to the Calvinist flaw. His disease also obviously tended to make him a one-track writer. Another wounding influence must have been the dislocation of Scottish life which put a premium on successful conceit. In England, an artificial writer like Meredith had the force of powerful interests behind him: an intellectual conception of Romance, a peculiar notion of science taken from Darwin, visions of supermen, a favoured race, the survival of the glorious fit. Stevenson had nothing more than his egoism and the cause of his personal success. It is the burden of all his letters. With remarkable skill he had made a whole generation share this concern of his, so that even the technique of his craft and his style were made a public matter as he sat in his dressing room collecting his crowd. But personal burdens are the concern only of the minor writers.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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## A LONG ARM IN THE DESERT

**Long Range Desert Group.** By MAJOR W. B. KENNEDY SHAW. *Collins.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Little by little we pick up the great adventures of the war. A few of them, on our doorstep—the Battle of Britain, for example, the convoys stealing out and returning to port—may have amazed us at the time: the Blitz was a cushy aftermath to the first, and every cigarette we smoked reminded—or should have reminded—us of the second. But further from home security or mere distance interposes a silence. Yugoslavia? One still doesn't know what went on there in the months before Tito began to reclaim his country. Crete: when the Nazi garrison surrenders, how many British and Australian soldiers will come down from the hills where they have been lurking for three years? And there are bigger "pockets" where the imagination, confronted with a map, fails to respond: worst of all Burma, which has to be indignantly written up, if it is to get into the news at all. That particular outskirt—since that is how it still appears to us—will soon become a centre of attention. About the real outskirts of the war, in the Baltic, in Northern China, in the hinterland of Africa, we have some excuse for being ignorant.

The title of Major Kennedy Shaw's history, with the scarab badge on its cover initialled L.R.D.G., meant nothing to me until I began to read his narrative. The battles of the Western Desert had taken place in a narrow corridor, along which armies poured and retracted, and south of that fringe there was—what? Desert. On the usual map of Libya there is a rectangle, 1,000 miles across, 250 miles deep, without contours or names. Major Shaw fills in his map with dotted tracks, place-names, a gap, an oasis, a dump, sand seas below sea level that look at the first glance like chains of enormous lakes. There are degrees, as it were, of desert, from the gravelly or boulder strewn plain to these sand seas which, from the air, appear to spread out in a satiny fluid.

> There is nothing like these sand seas anywhere else in the world. Take an area the size of Ireland and cover it with sand. Go on pouring sand on to it till it is two, three or four hundred feet deep. Then with a giant's rake score the sand into ridges and valleys running north-north-west and south-south-east, and with the ridges, at their highest, five hundred feet from trough to crest. Late in the evening when the sands cool quickly and the dunes throw long shadows, the Sand Sea is one of the most lovely things in the world. . . .

And one of the hardest to navigate. That war of a special kind could be waged over such terrain has probably never occurred to us; as it didn't to the napping Germans and Italians who discovered it usually when it was too late. A door would open at Nazi headquarters and the astonished Kommandant would just have time to look from the doorway to the grenade which his visitor had thrown in a corner; to the Italians the L.R.D.G. car on a highway would appear to contain Nazi staff officers, to the Nazi sentries a nondescript bearded figure skulking in the distance would seem to be a thieving Arab; at Baru a handful of men set light to thirty-two aeroplanes, destroyed the trucks in a car-park, attacked the barracks, and got away with six wounded and ten captured; at night on the quay at Derna three English soldiers pumped up the collapsible dinghies from which they were going to mine the ships in the harbour and swore at the sentries who challenged them, finally calling out the N.C.O. of the guard to give him a dressing-down. And—less dramatic, but perhaps the most remarkable of all these exploits—the road watch near "Marble Arch," where during the fateful months of 1942 L.R.D.G. maintained a guard of two men sheltering in scrub 500 yards from the road: every vehicle and troop movement 400 miles behind Rommel's front was reported to H.Q. Cairo week by week without interruption. The more one thinks about it the more staggering this achievement must appear. Behind its planning were years of desert exploration (the relieving patrol of two had 600 miles to travel), of experiment with every kind of instrument from sun-compasses to unarmoured Ford trucks, of the training, toughening and enterprise that must have made this the most seeded outpost of the Army. New Zealanders, Guards, Rhodesians supplied most of the personnel, which boasts an impressive honours list. There was also an Indian squadron, of which we learn little.

The idea of L.R.D.G. came from the Light Car Patrols of the last war, and it owes its inspiration as well as much of its equipment, technical and strategical, to Brigadier R. A. Bagnold, an explorer of the desert in peacetime. Tantalisingly little is told us about this officer or indeed about any of the exceptional personalities that must have attached to the exploits described by Major Shaw. No doubt this personal reticence is part of the character that goes to make such men; soldiers, explorers, Trappists in one. What does come out, casually, almost reluctantly,

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is the thing they are all in love with, the Desert. Its emptiness, its vast negation of living, obviously holds for them—as it will preserve a car's tracks for twenty years—a page on which one may work a lifetime to inscribe an initial. The war, pressing though it always was, seems almost incidental to the inscription, the effort that will be sanded over, the journeys out of time.

. . . In the early half-light a Y patrol truck crashed into the one in front of it and wrecked the radiator and the front of the engine. While we waited to change their guns and gear on to one of my three trucks, I walked up the low hill beside us. On the top was a heap of potsherds, fragments from the water jars of some Roman caravan from Siwa to Bahariya. We towed the damaged car into cover to pick up on our way back. Near the hiding place were the remains of a Beaufighter, blown into a thousand pieces, which had crashed after some sorties months before. I wondered who in two thousand years would next find the remains of two empires.

Quite apart from its record of human skill and endurance, which after a few pages, one comes to assume in these modest fighters, *Long Range Desert Patrol* is a fascinating book about sand and the mirage it creates in the minds of those who write about it. Major Shaw (intelligence officer of the group) rarely lets himself go in description, but how well he cancels one's romantic guesses, substituting instead precious fact. I remember noticing many years ago an Arab proverb, "Bless the datetrees, for they are your aunts." Major Shaw tells us a few of the things the aunts provide—"dates for food; palm-wine for drink; timber for building and firewood; leaves for thatch, baskets, mats and sandals; fibre for ropes."

G. W. STONIER

## GUY DE MAUPASSANT

**Choix de Contes.** By GUY DE MAUPASSANT. Edited by F. C. Green. *Cambridge University Press.* 8s. 6d.

Guy de Maupassant is one of those writers whose reputation is unlikely ever again to be as high as once it was. This is a distinction he shares with Sir Walter Scott, Romain Rolland, and perhaps with Kipling and Meredith—but for rather different reasons. When an author dates, it is either his method—his style—or his attitude to life which has died. In the case of Maupassant I think it is chiefly the latter which renders so much of his work nugatory to present-day readers. Like most good writers of his time, Maupassant was a pessimist, and though a man of immense talent he had not the genius required to transform a purely negative outlook into a positive belief, however dark. For only the greatest minds can stand the strain of utter pessimism. A Flaubert, a Hardy, a Vigny can embrace the tragic view of life and, in their best creations, make us *glad* that it is so and not otherwise. Guy de Maupassant cannot do this, and it is probably a pity that he should have imbibed from Flaubert more than the master's passionate reverence for stylistic perfection. Flaubert's own style would galvanise a corpse, but Maupassant's had not the same combination of power and precision. The vituperation and bitterness of *L'Education Sentimentale* was the result of an exasperated but profound feeling for humanity; the cardiac desiccation of *Bel-Ami* and *L'Histoire d'une Fille de Ferme*, on the other hand, was the product of indifference—if not of hostility. The delicate "Palinurus" has truly observed that those who are interested in their fellow creatures, but do not love them, should write aphorisms. This was the case with La Rochefoucauld and Chamfort, and it is significant that neither attempted to write novels. I think it is fair to assume that, had they done so, their fictions would have been expanded epigrams in which the idea came first and the characters were invented afterwards to fit the framework. This is, in fact, what too often happened to Guy de Maupassant. In so much—perhaps the greater part—of his work we feel that he is an unfair observer of the human heart, not because he loads the dice as assiduously as ever Thomas Hardy did, but because he does so in the interests of what is essentially a cheap view of life. The complexities of human motive cannot be adequately displayed in a series of smart, knowing, after-dinner stories.

This is the burden of Tolstoy's charge against Maupassant, and it is none the less damaging for the inacceptibility of much that Tolstoy says on the way to his conclusion. Here, for instance, is his description of *Une Partie de Campagne*, which is one of the twenty stories collected in Professor Green's anthology:

> The author presents, as an agreeable joke, a detailed account of the way in which two men, boating in shirt-sleeves, contrive to seduce, simultaneously, an old woman and a girl, her daughter.
>
> The author's sympathy is entirely for the two rascals. To such a point is this so, that he seems not only to ignore, but not even to notice what the seduced mother and daughter must have felt—not to speak of the father and the young man who was doubtless the girl's fiancé. The result is that we are invited to assist at a revolting description of a revolting crime, represented as a farce; and, furthermore, the incident itself is untruly told, since it is described only from the point of view which matters least—that of the pleasure derived by the rascals.

The remark about the shirt-sleeves betrays the real origin of Tolstoy's indignation—i.e., the purely fleshly nature of the story. Sexual pleasure, as such, shocked Tolstoy's moral sense, and he could not face the implication that the two women derived considerable satisfaction from their encounter with the "rascals." Furthermore, the mother is not "old"; no sympathy is expressed, or even implied, for anyone in the story; it is clear that the husband and fiancé were unaware of what had happened; and, finally, the "pleasure derived by the rascals" is simply alleged by Tolstoy. But when all this has been said, the fact, I think, remains that Tolstoy is fundamentally right about this story—and many which resemble it in Maupassant's collections. The total lack of moral outlook makes nonsense of the intrigue: viewed as comment, a grimace is not of much value.

But if Maupassant's art contributes little to the criticism of life, it seems probable that it will continue to be enjoyed for a number of subsidiary reasons. Superficially the short story is often a better index to an age than the novel, because the emphasis on incident in the former leads the writer to exploit the smaller details of the contemporary scene—in this case the mingled murk and brilliance of a vanished Paris, the boulevard of a Normandy town—the world of Manet and of Renoir. Here, at the end of *L'Ami Patience*, is a picture by Berthe Morisot:

> Je m'approchai de la fenêtre pour regarder le jardin, dont j'apercevais les arbres. Il était fort grand, ombragé, superbe. Un large chemin contournait un gazon où s'égrenait dans l'air un jet d'eau, entrait sous des massifs, en ressortait plus loin. Et tout-à-coup, là-bas, tout au fond, entre deux taillis d'arbustes, trois femmes apparurent. Elles marchaient lentement, se tenant par le bras, vêtues de longs peignoirs blancs ennuagés de dentelles. Deux étaient blondes et l'autre brune. Elles rentrèrent aussitôt sous les arbres. Je demeurai saisi, ravi, devant cette courte et charmante apparition qui fit surgir en moi tout un monde poétique. Elles s'étaient montrées à peine, dans le jour qu'il fallait, dans ce cadre de feuilles, dans ce fond de parc secret et délicieux.

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On the subject of the short story in general, the editor of this excellent collection has some controversial things to say. He will only allow the *conte* the right to the title of short story—the *conte* being the expanded epigram I have described above and in which Maupassant, of course, specialised. Of the other type of short story, the *nouvelle*, Professor Green speaks slightingly, as follows:

> No doubt there are many writers, especially in English, who publish what they call short stories, with no recognisable beginning, middle or end. But these productions, which usually attempt to capture a mood or a state of soul, are not really *contes*: they are isolated fragments of unborn novels, *pages choisies*, often beautifully written yet lacking the integrity of a complete work of art.

This seems to me robbing Peter to pay Paul. Why should all short fictions be *contes*? Professor Green's sweeping judgment condemns almost all Chehov's short stories, many of Balzac's, such as *Gobseck* and *Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan*, many of Henry James's, and a host of modern *nouvelles* by writers like Elizabeth Bowen, V. S. Pritchett and Jules Supervielle, to an anonymous limbo. Some further light is cast on Professor Green's dogmatic point of view by the strange statement that Voltaire's *contes*, including *Candide*, have been saved from oblivion "only by the brilliance of the author's style and the disruptive force of his ideas"—as who should say: The Petit Trianon is saved from insignificance only by the perfection of its architecture.

Again, if "romantics do not interest Maupassant," it is surely not because "in real life they are not very common and, outside literature, do little to change the pattern of human existence." To begin with, the romantic temperament, in one form or another, has been responsible for a very large number of the changes, great and small, that have taken place in history. Professor Green instances Saint Preux, La Dame aux Camélias, Jean Valjean and Vautrin; but these are only the literary equivalents of types quite common in everyday life, if you look for them. The truth surely is, not that Maupassant omitted romantics from his picture because they were unrepresentative, but because he was temperamentally unfitted to describe them.

Guy de Maupassant was not the kind of artist whose lifework shows any sort of progress. His early novel, *Une Vie*, is strikingly better than his last, *Notre Cœur*; and *Boule de Suif* (1880) is a better story than *Hautot Père et Fils* (1889). His volumes make a level landscape: there is not one without something good in it. This makes a choice difficult. The present one is chronological, and although other readers will doubtless have other preferences, I think it would have been hard to make a better or wider selection.

LIONEL CRANFIELD

## CHANGING AND UNCHANGING ASIA

**Glory and Bondage.** EDGAR SNOW. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

All the reports, whether from M.P.s. back from Tashkent and the Urals, or from journalists living in Russia, or now from Mr. Edgar Snow, show that the main reason for the confusion in the public mind about the U.S.S.R. is that it does not conform to any of the known categories of society. The Webbs were right to give the sub-title of "A New Civilisation" to their great study of *Soviet Communism*. Its economic and political institutions are not what used to be called Communist; they are even more emphatically not capitalist. A collective farm, as Edgar Snow describes it, is a village community with the land tilled co-operatively, but with small individual farms belonging to each peasant family. The village shop at which everyone can supplement the supply of rationed goods, is supplied with goods at extravagant "free-market" prices. It is a cultural as well as an economic unit, and Mr. Snow makes the staggering statement that in 1944 the U.S.S.R. expenditure on education was larger than that on defence.

The reasons for Soviet success in the war are manifold: the first is that to the traditional endurance of the Russian soldier is added the tremendous vitality due to a revolution which has released the submerged energies of 180 million people, who are now almost all literate and, more important, educated to face the world in which they live. The Red Army has come through to victory, as Mr. Churchill remarked, after a more terrible ordeal than any other army in history, and the reason is that it has an apparently unlimited number of capable, energetic and trained persons capable of taking command and ready at all times to sacrifice their lives for a society in which they believe. Nationalism, if you like, but a nationalism which is based on the excitement of creating a civilisation; it combines the enthusiasm and energy of the American pioneers, who subdued the North American continent in the last century, with a corporate morality which thinks it right that awards should be proportionate to energy and capacity, but which regards private ownership of national resources as absurd, and the exploitation of anyone's labour as morally disgraceful.

Edgar Snow gives us a straightforward record of his conversations and observations during a long tour of the U.S.S.R. Travelling freely in Russia, he was untroubled by the infuriating red tape of Moscow bureaucracy. He deals objectively with the differences between the civil rights of a Soviet and an American citizen. He reports some of the now familiar but always utterly horrifying stories of Nazi brutality, and in one illuminating passage describes a Soviet woman who talked of hunting Nazis as we talk of shooting partridges. But their conversation ends like this: "I shouldn't think their lives would be worth a kopek with you," I said frankly. "Why not?" asks Liza. "We are fighting only Hitlerites, and we don't want to exterminate the good Germans. Our best machine gunner is German, and we like and trust him. He is a fine man."

It emerges very clearly that one of the Soviet Union's principal assets is that leadership everywhere in the U.S.S.R. is in the hands of people between 30 and 45, and that the equality of women is absolute. What this means in terms of human energy and human happiness nobody who has not studied events in the Soviet Union can imagine. Above all, the immense advantage the Soviet Union has for the future over other countries lies, as a Russian Communist said to Edgar Snow, in "the unquestioned acceptance here of national economic planning. This is the main factor which will help us to recover from the war in a few years. One must stress that again and again, because it means there are no contradictory interests which can interfere with the logical development of post-war economy." It is for this reason that when the U.S.S.R. decides on a building programme, each of the federal units builds houses, theatres, factories and public buildings where it wishes and without obstruction or delay. Once decided, everyone is in a hurry to put the programme through.

There are defects as well as merits in the Soviet Union, as Stalin recently remarked. But this basic revolution has enabled a vast primitive population to turn itself, within a few years, by the individual efforts of many millions of people,

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into a great new civilisation spreading from the Ukraine to the Pacific. By way of contrast, Edgar Snow's book begins with an account of the stagnation and poverty of India, and after a long section on the U.S.S.R. proceeds to a depressing account of the China that is nominally administered from Chungking, takes us back to India and ends with a discussion about the future of Asia. Describing an interview with Lord Linlithgow, Snow says: "For over two hours he gave me a lecture on India until by the end I knew the country was ruled by an obstinate, discouraged and honest man." Snow does not minimise the difficulties, racial, religious and economic, and he fully admits the large measure of liberty which the British, in fact, leave to the Indians, even when their Congress leaders are in gaol. He quotes slogans openly used by Indians which, he says, would be met with bullets if they were uttered in Chungking. But the liberty, such as it is, which the British leave to the hungry and largely apathetic Indian peasants is negative, and it means little in a country which has not developed its iron deposits (though they may be best in the world) while the population rots in degrading poverty. He urges in conclusion that there is no reason why India, China and the countries now occupied by the Japanese in South-East Asia, should not develop and have in front of them the same hopeful future that lies before Soviet Siberia. We say that these people are "not ready for self-government." But, he urges, they can be, if they are given the fundamental freedom of national self-government, a programme of technical and progressive education and the necessary help with industrialisation. With such a programme, if the ideas that prevail in America and Britain can so far change, we could solve the problem of capitalism, since these areas provide the natural world market and the best opportunity of collaboration between the West and the Soviet Union.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

## WOMEN AS NOVELISTS

**Women Writers: Their Contribution to the English Novel.** By B. G. MACCARTHY. *Cork University Press.* 10s. 6d.

The publishers of this book unkindly refrain from giving any indication as to the sex of the author. If, therefore, I erroneously assume B. G. MacCarthy to be a woman, I offer my apologies in advance.

The record takes us from 1621 to 1744. It includes all the well-known names—the "incomparable Astrea," Aphra Behn, the scurrilous Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Haywood, the moral Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe and Mrs. Jane Barker, the lively Duchess of Newcastle—and many others perhaps less familiar: Lady Mary Wroath, Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, and Lady Fanshawe, who deserves to be far better known than she is. So comprehensive a list was only to be expected of such a book, but the real interest lies in the conclusions drawn by the author. In her role as Counsel for the Defence, she puts up a reasonable though not impassioned case. What part did women really play in the formation of English fiction? Realism might be expected of them: how far, then, did they contribute towards the realism which found its great expression in Defoe? Women might be expected to turn to fiction in the form of letter-writing, "to give vent to their love of intimate outpourings and familiar gossip": how far, then, did they contribute towards the crystallisation of this device in the hands of Richardson? These and similar questions Dr. MacCarthy examines with shrewdness and impartiality, and comes to the conclusion that, although women did contribute a little, it was not so much as the feminist might wish to suggest.

This is a sensible point of view; but Dr. MacCarthy is also justified in adding that "it is not feminism but the merest common sense to insist that women's contribution to fiction can only be judged in relation to their opportunities." This raises the old argument about what women's opportunities really were. Pretty poor, on the whole. The profession of authorship was not *bien vu* for a woman. Moreover, there was the question of education. Even Lucy Hutchinson, who was regarded by her parents as unusually intelligent, and who at one time had no fewer than eight tutors, was coerced into the study of music, dancing and needlework, for which she had no taste at all. "And for my needle, I absolutely hated it." But there is another side to the picture, for was not Lucy Hutchinson also taught French by her nurse and Latin by her father's chaplain? Had she so very much to complain of? And Anne Clifford who had Samuel Daniel as her tutor and John Donne as her friend? It is hard to see any valid reason why she should not have derived considerable intellectual benefit from the two associations. One is forced, rather reluctantly, to the judgment that genius rather than education in some cases was lacking.

I have one or two holes to pick in Dr. MacCarthy's scholarship, though I am quite prepared to accept her contribution that Aphra Behn was, in fact, the author of the *Ten Pleasures of Marriage*, a contention largely based on the fact that the *Ten Pleasures* are accompanied by a letter signed A.B. (Dr. MacCarthy, oddly enough, omits to point out in favour of her own argument the fact that Aphra Behn did occasionally sign her letters A.B.; I would refer her to a letter addressed to Tonson in 1683, the year after the publication of the *Ten Pleasures*.) But why does she say that Aphra Behn was *supposed* to have been engaged in secret service work in Holland, when the fact is beyond dispute—as, indeed, Dr. MacCarthy herself establishes in a footnote on the next page—and why does she say that Mrs. Behn *appears* to have been in a debtors' prison? There is no *appears* about it, as Dr. MacCarthy will discover if she studies the State Papers for 1668.

Finally, I should be much interested to know Dr. MacCarthy's reason for exalting Anne Clifford to a dukedom. True, Anne Clifford was triply a Countess—of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery; but so far as I am aware, there was never any Duke of Montgomery, let alone a Duchess. Perhaps Dr. MacCarthy has made a rash shot at this, even as she has made a rash shot at my own Christian name.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

## A SINGULAR SCHOOLBOY

**In Youth is Pleasure.** By DENTON WELCH. *Routledge.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Denton Welch has two remarkable gifts: an eye like a dragonfly and a clear, vivid style worthy of his powers of observation. Compared with him, most of us are horny-lidded and dull of sense, and the ease and brilliance of his descriptive writing deserve very high praise. One could quote a phrase or a paragraph from almost every page of *In Youth is Pleasure*; yet his originality is never forced, and rarely topples over into extravagance. His matter, however, falls short of his admirably accomplished manner.

This book, like its predecessor, *Maiden Voyage*, is a "personal interpretation of his boyhood." It describes the summer holidays of a fifteen-year-old schoolboy called Orvil Pym, a name which raises suspicions of some naïveté in the author, on the whole unjustified. Orvil is sensitive, motherless, imaginative and anxiety-ridden, equipped


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with the taste and knowledge of a connoisseur of 60 and the self-dramatising instincts of a child of ten. Apart from the interest in art, this is a familiar prospect, and many hearts must sink. The wretchedness, the emotional confusion, the sex obsessions of adolescence are now as over-exploited as the consumptive misunderstood children of Victorian fiction; we acquiesce numbly, though uncritically. Mr. Welch, however, has avoided both the self-pity and the complacent smirk that brood forbiddingly over many recollections of childhood.

Most of the action takes place in an hotel, once a royal palace, near the Thames. Such a place may really exist, but, though beautifully and minutely described, with its lodges, *cottage orné* and grotto, it remains a castle in the air, a ballet set come true. Against this decorative backcloth move the other characters: Orvil's enigmatic Far Eastern father, his tough elder brothers and their friends. On the river he watches enviously the happiness of two East End boys, camping and canoeing with a strong and silent, but kindly, schoolmaster. His agony of desire to escape from his own isolation and share in their life is admirably described, but many of the other episodes are too bizarre to be convincing. The fantastic happenings of real life, which cut into the memory, nearly always fail in fiction. At best we say: this is so unlikely that it is probably true. They can only be exaggerated and parodied, as by Evelyn Waugh, who would find ten pairs of lovers in peculiar circumstances where Orvil discovers one, or else they can be assimilated by a powerful eccentric world, like Dostoevsky's. The scene where Orvil gratuitously terrifies a baby by horrible grimaces might be plausible in *The Idiot*. But here it is just slapped down on paper and left to make its own impression—a very bad one.

At present Mr. Welch's interest is not focused on people, although he can describe them amusingly, nor even on his own psychological processes. His strength lies in his impassioned appreciation of the setting and the properties of life. No inkstand, no hairbrush can leave him indifferent; they set jangling a whole carillon of associations, as in the following passage:

> On one of her fingers she wore a half-hoop of very large diamonds: the sort of ring that harmonises with white suites of bedroom furniture, wreaths of composition roses, inset panels of canework, silver shoe-horns and button-hooks, and Reynolds's angel faces on the oxidised lids of powder pots.

For most people such objects express and illuminate the human being; for him people are avenues leading to prospects, appalling or enchanting, of their wallpaper, their dinner service, their bedroom slippers. Sometimes the more torpid and insensitive reader may be driven to wish that Orvil could occasionally stir his tea without dating and docketing the spoon, but on the whole he will be exhilarated by the intense pleasure or the acute distaste that the writer transmits so well. It is hard to resist such a catalogue as this:

> He thought of ruins lost in wooded valleys, kittens with black faces; toast in a Gothic Revival toast-rack like the nave of some miniature cathedral; lovely uncut stones reminiscent of sucked jujubes; a top-heavy Georgian coffee-pot shaped like a funeral urn; his mother's minute ring-watch, the face the size of a sequin, with little diamonds winking all round it.

or to avoid a shiver at the thought of Sir Robert Winkle's dressing-gown of peacock velvet striped with yellow satin. As for the descriptions of food they are superlatively good.

This is a book of great talent and promise rather than a good novel, but it is very enjoyable and so light in touch that its faults are regrettable rather than irritating. Mr. Welch is still knee-deep in his own youth, and it is asking much to demand detachment of him, as well as honesty, which he already possesses. When he can learn to stand outside his own experience, and to edit it more ruthlessly, he may well produce a masterpiece in the class of Julia Strachey's *Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*.

CRESSIDA RIDLEY

**Defeat, a Play by Nordahl Grieg.** *Victor Gollancz.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

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**Leslie Heward. A Memorial Volume.** Edited by ERIC BLOM. *Dent.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Few English musicians can ever have been more deeply regretted than the late Leslie Heward. He had every quality which goes to make a great executant musician—except good health; and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that his indubitable streak of genius was in some way bound up with the sickness which visited him in one form after another and eventually carried him off, just as he was reaching the height of his career as a conductor, at the age of forty-six. This muster of tributes combines personal recollections, designed to sketch in the personality of the man as it evolved through the various phases of his life, with accounts of his work as a conductor, composer and teacher. The list of those who have concurred to do him honour includes Ernest Ansermet, Arthur Bliss, Dr. Hely-Hutchinson, Dame Myra Hess, Moiseiwitsch, Sir Sidney Nicholson, the late Professor Ernest de Selincourt, and a host of others: an impressive company, in itself eloquent of Leslie Heward's importance to music in this country. The contributions are naturally of unequal interest, but none is dull, for Heward was much too pungent a character to elicit faint praise or to be content to inspire indifference. Whether he might have ended among the ranks of historic conductors is perhaps not worth debating now; but those who remember his performances—especially of modern works—will not soon forget the imaginative sweep and the precision of his interpretations.

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# Week-end Competitions

## No. 791

**Set by Saint-Loup.**

Every month one picture from the National Gallery is brought to be exhibited in London. Competitors are invited to write eight lines on the particular picture they would like to see thus displayed. Entries by April 3rd.

## RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 787

**Set by Fred Oyster**

A curse, in not more than 200 words, against anyone or anything.

**Report by Fred Oyster**

Four curses—on the competition setter—have come home to roost already.

May he receive indignant letters from a large number of disappointed competitors
Who point out that the prize-winning entries infringed the rules. . . .

Thus A. T. Gerard. What will he say when he finds that one prize has gone to an extract from Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic?* I don't know yet, but the letter-box may enlighten me. There was nothing, I shall point out, in the terms of the competition to bar quotations, though only two entries—including the Rev. John T. Hutchings' Motley—took this form. It deserves and gets a prize. Mr. Guy Innes triumphs also in the grand manner, and begins with an anathema which no doubt will seem to him fitting to the occasion. He argues, in an accompanying note, the case for making one's curses succinct, like Macbeth's "The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon." The best of the brief curses were Susanne Knowles's apostrophe to a queuer.

May you stand behind yourself, Madam, for eternity,
And Pantarei's
May all politicians become honest men! I can wish them no harder fate.

Either of which, pointed though they are, seems to stab deep enough. To conclude the prizewinners, Allan M. Laing's "Curse on a Crooner" and Miss M. Chisholm's blast on advertising will be read by many with gratitude; and one envies Able Seaman Till's cultivation of a beard and eloquence in its defence.

PRIZES (Equally Divided)

### Motley's "*Rise of the Dutch Republic*" (*Chapter XII*)

The priest's anathema against all antagonists:—

"In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the blessed Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, and all other Saints in Heaven, do we curse and cut off from our Communion him who has thus rebelled against us. May the curse strike him in his house, barn, bed, field, path, city, castle. May he be cursed in battle, accursed in praying, in speaking, in silence, in eating, in drinking, in sleeping. May he be accursed in his taste, hearing, smell, and all his senses. May the curse blast his eyes, head, and his body, from his crown to the soles of his feet. I conjure you, Devil, and all your imps, that you take no rest till you have brought him to eternal shame; till he is destroyed by drowning or hanging, till he is torn to pieces by wild beasts, or consumed by fire. Let his children become orphans, his wife a widow. I command you, Devil, and all your imps, that even as I now blow out these torches, you do immediately blow out the light from his eyes. So be it—so be it. Amen. Amen."

JOHN T. HUTCHINGS

Cursed with the Curse of Reuben be the Setter of Competitions who is lax in his Terms of Reference; he who is unstable as water, and, permitting not the best to excel, explaineth, "Verily, my meaning was other"; or, "As my soul liveth, I expected livelier possibilities."

May he incur odium for his omissions and his misquotations; may his Editor abhor him; may his Dictionary break its back, and his afternoon tea spill upon his Thesaurus.

May he dip his gum-brush in the ink-well and employ it ere he perceiveth his error. When he sharpeneth his indelible pencil, may the dust of the lead thereof tarry beneath his thumbnail; may his pins prick him as he taketh them from the box, and may his fingers fester. May the corner of his mouth be cut by the edge of the envelope as he licketh it, and may the backs of his postage stamps adhere the one to the other.

May his scissors be stolen; may Satan plait the ribbon of his typewriter; may the postage on all his returned manuscripts suffice not; may the Printer's spike pierce his hand as he fileth his copy, and the spike be taken brutally away.

GUY INNES

CURSE ON A CROONER

Lord, when dooms are at their worst,
Curse this pansy crooner first:
Give him quinsy, toothache, mumps:
Let his tonsils swell in lumps.

In his gullet cram a bone
Ere he seeks the microphone:
Lead him angry bees among
So that they may sting his tongue.

Beat his hollow head to dents
With the bluntest instruments;
And if blood results, belay
Round his neck a tourniquet.

With neuralgic spasms chase
That smug smirk from off his face:
Crown his piping, if still heard,
With the Order of The Bird.

Lord, when you have cursed this man
On a comprehensive plan,
With your brimstone breath intense
Curse the creature's audience!

ALLAN M. LAING

CURSE ON CHIMAERA OFFERED FOR SALE

I would not curse liars, I am a bit of a liar myself, but a pox on lie-mongering and may the devil fly away with commercial advertising, his own bastard. A murrain on them that make us the cankered promise of freedom from national boundaries, from the ground landlord, from ignorance and indigestion and plain-favoured faces. God rot them who offer us such Dead Sea apples for they know that willynilly we are attracted; may their lust for power mortify their extremities, may their greed ulcerate their duodeni and may their feet slip from the neck of the betrayed into everlasting quicksands of fear and vain hope and fear again.

M. CHISHOLM

A CURSE AGAINST A BEARD-DESPOILING BARBER

Slave of the Scissors and Onlie Forgetter of an Ancient and Noble Craft, here are the terms of my curse, writ in stubble by the sign of Neptune and the grace of fifteen hundred mermaids from the ruins of the beard you ravished:—

"May your palsied pate be denuded of hairs and a mighty forest spring up overnight under your chin, growing so rapidly that the floor of your brother's boudoir is swept in the evening by a beard which at mid-day merely fouled your soup.

"May your sleep be disturbed nightly by an apparition of Great Growths, your eyes dazzled and your puny soul tormented by beards as distinguished as Shakespeare's, as majestic as Shaw's, as provocative as Joad's, and as gallant as Drake's in the hey-day of England's greatness.

"Finally, Vandal of the Blunted Shears and Mopper-Up of Clean-Shaven Infidels, after suffering a blizzard in your gizzard may you marry the Bearded Lady of Salamanca and become the father of a little bearded baby who, on his tenth birthday, will engage you in a tug-of-war and use your beard as a bath-mat, an exercise in hedge-trimming, a Landscape Gardener's Companion, and a utility trapeze."

ABLE SEAMAN J. R. TILL


## Company Meeting

## THE NATIONAL BANK OF INDIA

THE annual general meeting of The National Bank of India, Ltd., will be held at 26, Bishopsgate, London, E.C., on March 27.

The following is an abridgment of the statement by the chairman (Mr. R. Langford James), circulated with the report and accounts:—

"The total of the balance-sheet at £9,623,503 1s. 9d. creates another record for the bank. It is an increase of about £1,750,000 over the previous year. It is accounted for entirely by an increase under the heading current, fixed deposit and other accounts. It is of interest to note that the total of the current, fixed deposit and other accounts at about £61,000,000 is more than double the total of these same accounts in the balance-sheet of December 31, 1939. Cash on hand and with our bankers and money at call at £23,000,000 show an increase of nearly £2,000,000. This with our large holding of Treasury Bills, which has increased by over £2,000,000, constitutes a very liquid position, which in these times is highly desirable. Government securities are down by almost £1,000,000.

"Since we met last what a remarkable change of what a heartening change has been recorded in the war situation! I will confine myself to affairs in the territories that principally concern the bank—India, Burma, and Ceylon. Of these Burma presents most interest, for in the past few months the Allies have embarked on large-scale operations which are surely, though necessarily comparatively slowly, evicting the Japanese from that country. We have in Burma two branches, in Rangoon and Mandalay, awaiting reopening, and our arrangements for doing so are complete so far as it lies in our power to make them."

### Personal

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INT. young lady wishes p.g. comf. friendly home, N.W. pref., mod. Box 7864.

ESHER 5-mile radius. Wtd. by reader, furn./unfurn. bed-sit., cooking facils. Mutual tolerance appreciated. Box 7868.

WANTED, holiday accom. for prof. cple. Southern Counties farmhouse pref.; access to sea. Private apartments. Special diet for one. July 11th–Aug. 8th. Box 7871.

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